

GRIEF AND GROWTH: PERSPECTIVES FROM LIFE-SPAN
PSYCHOLOGY AND PAULINE THEOLOGY

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R. Scott Sullender
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This dissertation, written by

R. Scott Sullender

*under the direction of _____ Faculty Committee,
and approved by its members, has been presented
to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of
Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Faculty Committee

Howard J. Clivell, Jr.
Chairman

Harold L. Felt

Paul Schorman

Date

April 17, 1978

Joseph C. Haugh

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ABSTRACT

For some people severe loss experiences are "in the long run" growth producing. While never wishing for such experiences, such people can cite ways in which they have grown emotionally, spiritually, vocationally and interpersonally as a result of their loss and grief. In contrast there are other people who seemingly never recover from severe losses, but cling to the past with varying degrees of bitterness or nostalgia. What are the factors that influence the differences between these two results? The purpose of this dissertation is to explore in a preliminary way the role of four factors in facilitating a person's grief-growth process. The factors are: 1. the availability of a supportive community, 2. the individual's participation in rituals, 3. the individual's personal meaning-system and 4. the individual's faith (understood as trust).

These variables are examined from the perspective of two fields of study not previously considered in grief research. In life-span psychology, grief is considered within the context of the inevitability of developmental losses. Therefore, developmental growth must include a periodical grieving as a person passes from developmental phase to another. From the perspective of Pauline theology, grief is set in the context of this eschatological age, dominated by afflictions, suffering and loss. Nevertheless, loss events in part because of their eschatological nature, can also be catalysts for spiritual growth.

The data from life-span psychology and Pauline theology generally supported the facilitative qualities of community and rituals

with certain qualifications. The most significant qualification was whether a supportive community or participation in rituals encouraged the free and full expression of grief emotions. While clarifying the meaning dimension or crisis in all grief reactions, the data nevertheless remained inconclusive regarding the role of meaning-system in facilitating the grief process. Finally, it is suggested that faith (understood as trust) is facilitative of a person's grief process in the sense that all growth presumes a basic trust.

The primary style of this dissertation is exploratory. Its data is primarily the research and literature of the fields of study, although clinical material is used for illustrative purposes. Therefore the tentative conclusions of this dissertation must await confirmation from future empirical and clinical studies

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a new interest and appreciation of grief as an universal and powerful emotion. Counselors and therapists are more keenly aware of the importance of "grief work." Researchers are exploring the many varieties and intensities of grief, struggling to formulate a concise definition of this once neglected emotion. On the popular book shelves many first-hand accounts of grief experiences offer inspirational help. Hundreds of self-help groups are springing up across the nation in an effort to assist the bereaved and divorced in adjusting to their loss.

Health professionals who work with the bereaved are particularly interested in the interrelationship of grief and growth. For some people severe loss or separation events are "in the long run" growth producing experiences. While never wishing for such experiences, such people can cite ways in which they have grown emotionally, spiritually, vocationally and interpersonally as a result of their loss and grief. In contrast, there are other people who seemingly never recover from severe losses, but cling to the past with varying degrees of bitterness or nostalgia. Their grief remains unresolved and unfinished, sometimes with various "pathological" expressions.¹

¹The term "pathological" or abnormal grief is a difficult and ambiguous concept. What is pathological for one person or culture certainly may not be so for another person or culture. This author prefers the term "unresolved grief" or "contaminated grief."

What are the factors that influence the differences between these two results? This is the question that gives rise to the concern and focus of this dissertation.

The most important factor in the successful resolution of grief is the free and full expression of grief feelings. The more a bereaved individual fully feels and freely expresses his/her grief in overt ways, the more the grief process is facilitated toward completion. In contrast, the bereaved individual who denies, delays or otherwise avoids his/her grief feelings and their free expression, inhibits and blocks the grief-growth process. The importance of this single most critical variable has been confirmed by nearly every study of the grief process in the last thirty years of modern research.² Erich Lindemann's classic study of the survivors of the Coconut Grove fire emphasized the importance of "grief work" and the dangers of delayed grief in leading to "morbid grief reactions."³ Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her popular study of anticipatory grief among the terminally ill, emphasizes the importance of facing one's death for both patient and health professional alike.⁴ Similarly, modern grief researchers, like Colin Parkes, John Bowlby, and David Switzer all confirm this same conclusion.⁵

²A complete and detailed review of the literature will be conducted in chapter 2 in the context of a discussion of the nature and dynamics of grief.

³See Erich Lindemann, "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," American Journal of Psychiatry, 61 (September 1944), 141-48.

⁴See Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, On Death and Dying (New York: Macmillan, 1970).

⁵See Colin Murray Parkes, Bereavement (New York: International

The unanimity of this conclusion however does not answer all of the questions regarding the interrelationship between grief and growth. Questions remain concerning what factors enable a bereaved person to grieve fully and freely. Why are some individuals able to grieve fully and freely, thus facilitating their grief-growth process, while others seem unable to do so? Here is the precise focus of this dissertation. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore in a preliminary way the role of four factors in contributing to a person's ability to grieve fully, and thus facilitate the grief-growth process. Those factors are: 1. the availability of a supportive community, 2. the individual's participation in rituals, 3. the individual's personal "meaning-system," and 4. the individual's faith, understood as trust. This author posits the thesis that these four factors--community, rituals, meaning-system and faith--are important factors in contributing to a person's ability to grieve freely and thereby facilitate his/her personal growth. The importance of the first two factors in contributing to grief's resolution has been partially supported by some research material, but an exploration of the role of a person's meaning-system and faith is, as far as this author knows, unique to this dissertation.

This dissertation will explore the interrelationship of grief and growth, and in particular the role of the four factors noted above from the advantage point of two distinct disciplines. Those disciplines are: Life-span psychology and Pauline theology. This author chose

Universities Press, 1972); John Bowlby, Attachment and Loss (New York: Basic, 1972); David K. Switzer, The Dynamics of Grief (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970).

these two disciplines in part because to date there has been very little written on grief from these perspectives.

Much of the research material on grief has been done within the framework of the medical professions, mostly by physicians, psychiatrists and psychoanalysts.⁶ "Medical concerns," like the somatic effects of grief, pathological grief reactions, the origins of grief in the infant's separation anxiety, and the dangerous effects of unresolved childhood grief upon later adult mental health, have dominated the research literature on grief. Far fewer people have studied grief from the perspective of the more common, but less dramatic occasions in life, such as separation/divorce, retirement, children leaving home, etc. These developmental events are the content of study for life-span psychologists, who view these events as transitional stages within the life cycle of a person's growth and development. With each transition there are developmental losses associated with the stage just completed. Developmental growth depends upon the successful emotional adjustment to these inevitable losses during the life cycle. Consequently, grief is an integral part of human developmental growth and a study of grief from the perspective of life-span psychology should yield some new and unique contributions to the theoretical understanding of grief and growth.

Similarly, clinical studies in grief have also been notable secular in nature, lacking any understanding of grief within a theological framework. This statement seems unusual at first, because the

⁶A review of Psychological Abstracts, and Robert Rulton (comp.) Bibliography on Death, Grief and Bereavement 1845-1973 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1973), confirms this conclusion.

church's historical role in caring for the dying and bereaved has led to a great deal of literature on the pastoral care of the bereaved. Most of this literature, however, could be classified as "how to" books for the pastor, with little serious theological reflection on grief. Another classification of religious literature on grief is the first-hand personal account of grief experiences. Probably best known of this type in recent years is Catherine Marshall's To Live Again.⁷ Here again the theological reflection on grief tends to be superficial and pietistic. The only serious systematic theological literature that comes close to a discussion of grief has been in the related topics of death and human suffering. While helpful, the task of developing a serious theological understanding of grief as such remains undone. Nevertheless, a theological understanding of grief and its role in spiritual growth could offer some important new insights and contributions to a theoretical understanding of grief and growth.

METHODOLOGY

Broadly speaking, this dissertation seeks to be interdisciplinary in nature: conducting both a psychological and a theological analysis of grief. This dissertation will employ the "perspectival" method of doing pastoral theology. This method is associated with the names Daniel Day Williams and Seward Hiltner.⁸ This author acknowledges

⁷Catherine Marshall, To Live Again (New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, 1957)

⁸Daniel Day Williams describes the perspectival method in "Truth in a Theological Perspective," Journal of Religion, XXVII: 4

that there are other methods of doing theology and, in particular, pastoral theology. Paul Tillich's "method of correlation" correlates theological answers with the culture's existential questions.⁹ Don S. Browning's "analogical method" seeks to "make positive theological statements on the basis of insights derived from psychotherapy."¹⁰ Similar to this approach is Thomas Oden's thesis that Christian theology makes explicit what is implicit in psychotherapeutic procedures.¹¹ Eduard Thurneysen, building on a Barthian theology, understands pastoral theology as the practical discipline of applying the Word of God to concrete human encounters.¹²

The perspectival method understands psychology and theology as two different perspectives on reality. Each discipline views the same phenomenon, but from different "angles of vision." Consequently, each perspective sees a given subject from a slightly different angle, highlighting and emphasizing slightly different aspects. "A consequence of of this situation," writes Williams, "is that we possess no 'universal' categories whose meanings are finished."¹³ Each perspective understands

(October 1948), 242-54. Seward Hiltner describes the same method as it applies to theological disciplines in his Preface to Pastoral Theology (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958)

⁹See "Introduction" in Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), I:3ff.

¹⁰Don S. Browning, Atonement and Psychotherapy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 7.

¹¹See Thomas Oden, Kerygma and Counseling (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966)

¹²See Eduard Thurneysen, A Theology of Pastoral Care (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962)

¹³Williams, p. 244.

only "relative wholes." The whole truth of any subject must be derived from a dialogue between the perspectives seeking truth on that subject.

Ontologically, the perspectival method assumes that all reality is interwoven in sets of interdependent relationships. Consequently, truth is essentially one, but a complete understanding of any subject can only be derived from the dialogue among the different perspectives seeking truth on that subject. Theological truth is known through the continuing process of discussion, criticism and reformulation between theology and the perspectives of other secular disciplines. Browning clarifies the goal of the perspectival method: "It (the perspectival method) believes that faith can clarify its own self-understanding through the process of a dialogue with other perspectives on the world besides its own."¹⁴ Yet, in order for authentic dialogue to occur, the validity and integrity of each discipline must be maintained. Reductionism--either reducing theological concepts to psychological terms, or vice versa--robs each perspective of its validity and integrity and thereby reduces dialogue to monologue.

According to the perspectival method, all thinking must operate with a two-fold process of verification: internal verification and external verification.¹⁵ Each discipline has its own methods of verification, philosophical presuppositions and even language systems. Based upon their presuppositions and using their methods, each discipline

¹⁴Don S. Browning, "Analogy, Symbol and Pastoral Theology in Tillich's Thought," Pastoral Psychology, XIX, 181 (February 1963), 42.

¹⁵These terms were used in the discussion on the perspectival method in Browning, Atonement and Psychotherapy, p. 165.

seeks to be internally consistent, gradually building its theoretical understandings of any given subject. But then, each perspective or discipline must apply the principle of external verification by testing its truth against the truth of other perspectives on the same subject. When different disciplines, using different internal methods of verification, begin to confirm and augment each other's truth, a new level of verification and of truth itself is reached.

The perspectival method is relevant to a study of grief because grief is by nature a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Grief has a social dimension expressed as mourning. Closely associated is a cultural dimension of grief, expressed in rituals and customs. Grief has a psychological dimension expressed as pain, sorrow, and longing. Finally, grief has a theological dimension expressed in the meaning crisis that often surrounds a severe loss. No complete understanding of grief would be possible without at least the contributions of these varying perspectives: social psychology, cultural anthropology, psychology and theology. An analysis of grief from just one perspective, like a medical-psychoanalytic perspective, would yield a narrow and incomplete theory of grief. Even though this dissertation will deal with just two perspectives the perspectival method would be applicable to a larger inclusive study of grief as well.

This dissertation employs the disciplines of psychology and theology as two different perspectives on the same subject: grief and growth. Chapters 2-3 will examine grief and growth from the perspective of the life cycle theorists, noting carefully the nature and role of grief in developmental growth. These chapters will assume the

presuppositions, employ the language systems and refer to the research materials of the life cycle theorists. Chapters 4-5 will examine grief and spiritual growth from the perspective of Pauline theology. Here the theological language system and the research methods of Biblical criticism will be employed. Then in chapter 6 these two perspectives will engage in a dialogue--confirming, enriching and critiquing the conclusions of each discipline with the insights of the other. This process will enable this author to make normative theoretical statements about the nature and role of grief in human growth that are both psychologically effective and theologically sound. Finally, chapter 7 will describe the implications of this study for pastoral care and suggestions for further research.

DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Psychology is the study of the human psyche, including its structure, dynamics, growth and breakdown. The particular area of life-span psychology is the study of the psycho-social development of humans through the life cycle. Life-span psychology differs from developmental psychology in that the latter currently tends to focus upon the first two decades of life, whereas life-span psychology considers the full scope of the human life cycle.¹⁶ Prominent among life-span psychologists are Erik Erikson, Charlotte Bühler, Sidney

¹⁶D. C. Charles, "Historical Antecedents of Life-Span Developmental Psychology," in L. R. Goulet and Paul B. Baltes (eds.) Life-Span Developmental Psychology (New York: Academic Press, 1960), pp. 23-38. See page 25.

Pressey, Bernice Neugarten and Robert Havighurst. The term life cycle refers to the recognizable sequential pattern of human changes from birth to death.

This dissertation defines grief as the process of withdrawing emotional attachment from any person, object or thing in which one has made significant emotional investment.¹⁷ Grief normally begins in response to the real, perceived or anticipated loss of any emotionally valued person, object or thing. While primarily an emotional process, grief also has important physical, social and spiritual expressions. The social expressions of grief are normally termed mourning. The term bereavement refers to being in a state of real, perceived or anticipated loss, of which grief is the characteristic emotion.

This dissertation defines growth as any change in a health-oriented direction. Health is defined as a state of being in which one perceives reality accurately, lives fully in the present, and fully integrates all aspects of one's life. For purposes of this dissertation, the term health as so defined describes psycho-social health, unless otherwise qualified. Developmental growth is defined as changes in a health-oriented direction that are initiated in the individual by life cycle changes.

Theology is the critical reflection upon the nature and activity of God, and upon all human existence in light of God's revelations. Biblical theology is the particular branch of theology concerned

¹⁷A complete discussion and definition of grief as a function of attachment will be presented in chapter 2.

with the study of the nature and activity of God as revealed in Biblical materials. Biblical theology is based upon the critical study of the Biblical texts with the appropriate use of historical-critical methods. Pauline theology is defined as the study of how St. Paul understands the nature of God and of human existence in light of God's revelations. Like the broader category of Biblical theology, Pauline theology is based upon the historical-critical study of Pauline texts.

In accordance with the discipline of theology, this dissertation assumes that God exists. As spirit, God belongs to another realm of existence, but nevertheless freely transcends and participates in this human realm of space and time. Through the witness of the New Testament, God is best understood as "creative responsive love."¹⁸ This dissertation assumes that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth represent a normative description of the optimum state of humanity. Sanctification or spiritual growth is thereby defined as the progressive changes in an individual in the direction of Christ-likeness. These progressive changes are primarily, but not limited to, changes in one's religious beliefs, attitudes and values. Christ-likeness is defined as those qualities exhibited by Jesus of Nazareth, including a people-oriented value system, a full relationship with God, a full integration of the self, and a faith understood as trust and expressed as courage.

A meaning-system is defined as a set of beliefs about the nature

¹⁸A term borrowed from a recent book by John B. Cobb, Jr. and David R. Griffin, Process Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976).

of reality that gives a person a sense of meaning and purpose, particularly in the face of hardship, suffering or death. A meaning-system is by definition primarily cognitive in nature. Along with Viktor E. Frankl,¹⁹ this author assumes that the need for meaning is innate and universal in humanity. Traditionally, this need for meaning has been provided by, but not limited to, religious beliefs.

Faith is defined as a sense of trust, often expressed as courage to risk personal pain or safety. In contrast to meaning-system, faith is primarily pre-cognitive in nature. But since faith is based upon a trustful confidence in a given segment of reality, it is inevitably closely linked to a person's meaning-system.

LIMITATIONS

In the psychological analysis this dissertation limits itself to the specific area of life-span psychology. This author recognizes that life cycle studies are just one example of the larger fields of developmental psychology and psychology in general. Grief could also be examined from many other psychological perspectives as well, but such tasks will be beyond the scope of this dissertation.

In the theological analysis this dissertation limits itself to the specific area of Pauline theology. Defined as Pauline letters are: Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, I Thessalonians, Philippians and Philemon. Pauline concepts and themes will be used as the

¹⁹See Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul (New York: Knopf, 1955); From Death-camp to Existentialism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959); Man's Search for Meaning (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962).

foundational base for this dissertation's theological analysis. Even though several other Biblical writers as well as several modern theologians, have addressed themselves to many of these same issues, their work will be beyond the scope of this dissertation. This author recognizes that further theological studies on grief and growth could be done from the perspectives of Old Testament theology (Job, Lamentations) or of the Gospel traditions (Jesus facing his own death). Such studies, while fascinating are also beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The primary thrust of this dissertation is in the area of theory building. While using clinical studies for illustrative purpose and noting the clinical implications of this study, this dissertation primarily offers new theoretical perspectives on grief. In order for any new theoretical understanding of grief to be fully valid and applicable, empirical studies will need to be conducted in the future to validate the conclusions of this dissertation.

This dissertation is primarily exploratory in nature. It seeks to explore issues and areas not previously considered in depth. Therefore its conclusions will inevitably be tentative and its evidence preliminary, awaiting verification of more definitive studies. However, this author believes that such an exploratory study is a necessary foundation for later systematic empirical research.

CONTRIBUTIONS

It is hoped that this dissertation will contribute to the ongoing task of building a comprehensive theory of grief. Understanding grief and its relationship to growth from the perspectives of life-span

psychology and Pauline theology will help contribute to the current theory of grief by offering two perspectives on grief not previously considered in depth. By building a better theory of grief, this dissertation will contribute to strengthening the ability of health professionals to minister effectively to the bereaved.

In seeking to do a dual analysis of a single emotion (in this case, an emotional process), this dissertation shall be contributing to the on-going dialogue between psychology and theology. In so doing this dissertation will be enriching the perspectives of both disciplines, while increasing the general body of knowledge on grief and growth. This author assumes that both disciplines--psychology and theology--have unique insights and understandings to make on the subject herein studied. Only together and in dialogue can any full theoretical understanding of grief be achieved.

Pastoral counselors will find this dual analysis of grief and growth especially helpful. They alone among the health professionals seek to synthesize the methods of psychology and the insights of theology into a working harmony that can effectively heal. In addition, it is often the clergy or pastoral counselors who have some of the most frequent and long-term contacts with the bereaved. It is hoped that this dissertation will offer to pastoral counselors a theoretical perspective on grief and growth that is psychologically effective and theologically sound.²⁰

²⁰In this dissertation, I have endeavored to eliminate sexist language forms as much as possible. There are only two exceptions. First, direct quotations were left intact. Secondly, certain references to God were left in the masculine form, because the use of "he/she" or "it" is theologically unacceptable to this author. I extend my apologies to the portions of my readership, who will be offended. I hope that in the future we can find a more adequate theological language.

Chapter 2

THE NATURE AND DYNAMICS OF GRIEF

"Bereavement is an universal and integral part
of the experience of love"
C. S. Lewis¹

A. INTRODUCTION

Grief is a much more common emotion than one might at first think. Surely everyone will eventually know the grief that comes in response to the death of someone dearly loved. Many will grieve the loss of a marital relationship in separation and/or divorce. But amid these larger griefs, there are also the smaller common griefs of everyday living. Inevitably, most people will change jobs or homes and know the grief that comes in response to the loss of the familiar. Every time people visit an airport, train station or bus depot, they give expression to grief as friends and family arrive and depart. Like the air, grief is so common in human experience that people seldom notice it except in tragic circumstances.

Given the great universality of grief experiences, one might think that a precise definition of this pervasive and powerful emotional complex would be easy. On the contrary, the task of defining grief is not an easy one. There are many reasons for this difficulty. First, grief itself is a process and therefore it is always changing and becoming. Second, grief varies with the type of loss involved. The

¹C. S. Lewis, A Grief Observed (London: Faber & Faber, 1961), p. 41.

grief that one experiences over the death of one's parents is not exactly the same as the grief experienced over the loss of a job or prized possession. Third, grief reactions vary widely with the unique individuals involved. Variables such as age, sex, religious beliefs, personality structure, and length and intensity of the relationship with the lost object, will make each person's loss uniquely their own. Fourth, grief reactions must be set within a cultural context. What is appropriate mourning in twentieth century America will not be appropriate in third century Africa, and so on. Even within America, varying subcultures and family systems will further mold the social expressions of grief.

Nevertheless in spite of this inherent difficulty in defining grief, this chapter will critically review the wide variety of literature on grief, building toward an understanding of the nature and dynamics of grief that will serve as a "working definition" for the remainder of the dissertation. Initially, this chapter will explore the wide variety of loss experiences and the equally complex array of grief symptoms. It will then examine the three major theoretical approaches to grief and their relative strengths and weaknesses as theoretical models. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the factors that contribute to grief's resolution as a growth experience, with special attention focused upon the four factors: community, ritual, meaning-system and faith.

B. VARIETY AND UNIVERSALITY OF LOSS

This examination of the nature of grief begins with a phenomenological survey of the wide variety of grief experiences, a review that will provide a context and a criteria with which to evaluate the varying definitions of grief. For the moment grief will be considered simply as the emotional response to loss or separation. One can lose or be separated from a wide variety of people, possessions or even aspects of identity. Such losses can be experienced as sudden and traumatic tragedies or as gradual and predictable parts of the life cycle. They can be total or partial losses. They can be real or only perceived as real. They can be permanent or temporary. As a response to such losses, grief can be after-the-fact or anticipatory in nature. These variables are not mutually exclusive and taken together they help to color the character of the grief reaction. For the purposes of this review, however, three broad categories of types of loss will be examined:² 1) the loss of a person, 2) the loss of some aspect of the "self," and 3) the loss of external objects.³ A fourth type of loss,

²For the most part, the focus of this chapter is on "accidental losses"--losses which are usually unwelcomed and for which one is usually unprepared. "Developmental losses," on the other hand, are usually predictable, gradual and at times welcomed. The distinction between "accidental losses" and "developmental losses" is however a complex one. The death of one's parents, for example, is a developmental loss when occurring in the "fullest of time," but an accidental loss when occurring at an earlier time. Obviously, timing and personal perceptions are important variables.

³Parkes has proposed a slightly different system of classifying losses. He proposed five kinds: 1) personal relationships, 2) loved possession, 3) familiar environment, 4) physical and mental capacities, and 5) role and status. For further details, see Colin Murray Parkes,

developmental losses, will be considered in depth in the following chapter.

Loss of a Person

The loss of a significant person in death is undoubtedly the most profound and potentially severe type of loss possible. Consequently, the grief reaction is also potentially the most intense and painful possible. In the social readjustment scale (stress scale) developed by Holmes and Rahe, 394 people rated 43 life events according to the degree of adjustment demanded. The death of a spouse was rated as the most difficult adjustment possible and given the maximum of 100.⁴ Consequently, "The period of bereavement following the loss of a loved or valued person is," according to Dr. David Peretz, "one of greater risk in terms of the precipitation of illness and death for the bereaved individual."⁵ This is reflected in higher rates of death, suicide, office visits to physicians, and use of psychological and clergy services for the bereaved during the first year of bereavement.⁶ In the grief

"Psycho-Social Transitions: A Field for Study," Social Science and Medicine, V (1971), 103ff.

⁴See Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale," Journal of Psychosomatic Research, II (1967), 213-18. Or Thomas H. Holmes and Minoru Masuda, "Psychosomatic Syndrome," Psychology Today, V:11 (April 1972), 71-72, 106.

⁵David Peretz, "Development, Object-Relationships, and Loss," in Bernard Schoenberg, et al., Loss and Grief (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 6.

⁶See chapter two of Colin Murray Parkes, Bereavement (New York: International Universities Press, 1972).

reaction to the sudden death of a spouse, we potentially see grief in its most dramatic and dangerous form. Consequently, most research studies of grief have focused primarily on the loss through death of a significant other, and in particular on the loss of a spouse. Colin Parkes, who spent his life's work studying conjugal bereavement, underscores this point:

The loss of a husband or wife is one of the most severe forms of psychological stress, yet it is one that many of us can expect to undergo at some time in our lives.⁷

One can also lose other loved ones through death. The loss of a child, for example, while not as common in twentieth century western nations as it was in antiquity, can nevertheless be what Geoffrey Gorer calls "the most distressing and long-lasting of all griefs."⁸ Perhaps the death of a child is experienced with greater repulsion and tragedy, precisely because it is so uncommon in our times. There is something repulsive and "against the natural order of things" about the early death of a child. On the other hand, the death of one's parents, while painful and at times tragic, is a more predictable life-event. Similarly, the deaths of significant friends, neighbors, public figures⁹ (President Kennedy) can also cause intense grief reactions. The key variable in all deaths of loved ones is the intensity and character of the bereaved's relationship to the deceased.

Grief reaction over the death of a loved or valued person often

⁷Ibid., p. xi.

⁸Ibid., p. 123.

⁹See Harold Orlansky, "Reactions to the Death of President Roosevelt," Journal of Social Psychology, XXVI (1947), 235-66.

begins long before the actual death. In cases where the deceased suffers many months or even years with a terminal illness, grief takes on an anticipatory character and often starts at the time of diagnosis. One of the first¹⁰ to systematically examine anticipatory¹¹ grief was Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. Among her five stages in the emotional journey of the terminally ill person, Kübler-Ross identified "preparatory grief" in the fifth stage, as a type of depression. She considered such preparatory depression as a necessary element "that the terminally ill patient has to undergo in order to prepare himself for final separation from this world."¹²

The permanent loss of a significant person may not be by death alone. In a divorce, couples often experience intense forms of grief. Marriage and divorce counselors have noted that the process of emotional divorce, not to be confused with legal, economic or social divorce,¹³

¹⁰Other early theorists were Erich Lindemann, "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," American Journal of Psychiatry, C1 (September 1944), 141-48; and C. K. Aldrich, Psychiatry for the Family Physician (New York: Blakiston-McGraw-Hill, 1955).

¹¹In some ways anticipatory grief as experienced by the dying person is a category of grief all unto itself. First, the grief of the terminally ill patient is by definition totally anticipatory. There is no after-the-fact grief. Second, the dying person's loss is total and final. The dying person is losing not just a job, not just a limb, not just a home, even not just a spouse, but everything! The dying patient's grief is a response to the total and comprehensive loss of everything, all at once. In comparison, even the closest of relatives is only losing a spouse, or a father or a mother.

¹²Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, On Death and Dying (New York: Macmillan, 1959), p. 86.

¹³The distinction between the six levels of divorce is made in Paul Bohmann, "The Six Stations of Divorce," in Maricia E. and Thomas E. Lasswell (eds.) Love, Marriage, Family (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1973), pp. 475-88.

is not unlike the grief of a widowed spouse. "Divorce is indeed a death," writes Mel Krantzler,

a death of a relationship; and just as the death of someone close to us brings on a period of mourning during which we come to terms with our loss, so too a marital break-up is followed by a similar period of mourning.¹⁴

Many of the same elements, as anger, guilt, depression, loneliness, and weeping that are expressed in the widowed spouse are often present in the divorced spouse as well. However, the major difference between the loss of a spouse through death and through divorce, is that divorce always involves some element, however small, of personal choice and responsibility, whereas the death of another is usually not chosen. Therefore, divorce is a much more complex loss experience and therefore subject to even wider varieties of grief reactions.

Divorces, like other kinds of losses, can be experienced either as a sudden, unexpected and unwelcomed event, or as a planned, predictable and mutually agreed upon event, or any variation thereof. It is important to note here that grief is not just a response to a lost love relationship. Relationships characterized by intense bitterness and anger can require as much grief work to successfully disengage from as the idealized love relationship.¹⁵ Grief, as will be discussed later, is a function of attachment not love. Strong love as well as strong anger are both forms of attachment. Only the opposite--a relationship characterized by detachment or indifference--would exhibit the lowest

¹⁴Mel Krantzler, Creative Divorce (New York: New Americana Library, Signet Book, 1973), p. 70.

¹⁵This distinction was first observed and recorded in Lindemann, p. 9.

amounts of grief upon dissolution.

Besides the formalized legal relationships of marriage and divorce, there are countless other types of relationships that involve grief when ended. Teenagers repeatedly enter into special romantic relationships described as "going steady," "crushes," or "puppy love." Often these relationships can be very intense, compounded by strong sexual and self-esteem needs. If so, "breaking up" can be an emotionally painful and socially awkward experience. After being "jilted" or "left for another" the abandoned partner can experience sorrow, loneliness, anger, weeping--many of the elements of grief.

Meaningful relationships are not limited to romantic and sexual ties, either. Throughout life people form special relationships for periods of time. Most people have had special friends and teachers in high school from whom they are parted later by circumstance, distance or changes in preferences. One only needs to watch a typical high school graduation exercise to notice the wide expressions of grief. Counselors and clients form special relationships characterized by intimacy and honesty that must end upon the termination of the counseling. That termination process involves grief work, and several therapists¹⁶ have built a whole systems of psychotherapy around the importance of time-limited counseling. Ministers and congregations often have similar kinds of experiences when a long-time trusted minister leaves a church for a new assignment. When relationships built upon years of shared

¹⁶For example, see Otto Rank, Will Therapy (New York: Knopf, 1936) or James Mann, Time-Limited Counseling (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973)

experiences are terminated, the participants inevitably experience grief. Attempts to mitigate the pain with "promises" to write, gestures of affection and parting rituals, only point to the reality of the loss and the inevitability of grief feelings.

Separations or losses of significant others can be temporary in nature as well. One can be separated from a loved one by military service, imprisonment, hospitalization, vacations or business trips. In the case of the military person, separation from his/her family is a normal expectation. Robert Bermudes, pastor of a church in Groton, Connecticut, conducted a study¹⁷ of the emotional cycles of the wives of submariners right before and during their husbands' tour of duty. He isolated five stages--shock, release, withdrawing, anger and despair, which corresponded to Lindemann's classic work of the bereaved survivors of the Coconut Grove Fire. He concluded that no matter how frequently repeated, the dynamics of grief are operative in these temporary military separation. He writes:

The submariner's life style calls for regular, long- and short-term separations from his family. For his wife 'separation anxiety' . . . parallels the five stages of normal grief response observable in individuals who are grieving the death of a loved one.¹⁸

Longer military separations are even more complex and bewildering, but still involve the dynamics of grief and mourning. The Center for Prisoner of War Studies¹⁹ in San Diego, California has systematically

¹⁷Robert W. Bermudes, "A Ministry to the Repeatedly Grief-Stricken," Journal of Pastoral Care, XXVII, 4 (December 1973), 218-28.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 228.

¹⁹The work of the Center for POW Studies has been published in Hamilton I. McCubbin et. al.(eds.) Family Separation and Reunion (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974)

studied the families of Prisoners of War and Missing in Action service men in an effort to understand the psychological dynamics and needs of these people. Ludwig Spolyar studied over two hundred POW and MIA families and found grief concepts and terminologies most helpful in understanding the psychological dynamics of these families. Yet with the MIA wife and family, the normal grief process was indefinitely stifled because the family was never certain that its loved one was actually dead or alive. He writes:

The wives of military personnel missing in action will find themselves emotionally involved in a unique situation which includes the process of grieving, an emotional suffering. They are in a double bind, for they do not know for sure whether their loved one is dead or alive. Unfortunately, this emotional state continues for an indefinite and unknown period, creating greater anxiety.²⁰

Loss of Some Aspects of Self

The second category is losses of some aspect of one's self. Self is defined as an over-all sense of identity or self-image, including those things, ideas, or roles by which one defines him/herself. For example, one might lose an aspect of one's identity, like a role, a status, a dream about the future, one's pride, a habit or literally a part of one's body. Each of these losses involves a loss of some aspect of one's self. Here the importance of one's perception in determining the loss is clear. David Peretz writes:

Loss is simultaneously a real event and a perception by which the individual endows the event with personal or symbolic meaning. One may experience an event as a loss when another individual would

²⁰Ludwig Spolyar, "The Grieving Process in MIA Wives," in *ibid.*, p. 83.

not describe it as such. Loss of honor or 'loss of face' are examples of this kind of loss.²¹

✓ Psychotherapy and counseling are normally involved in helping people to change some aspect of their self or some pattern of behavior. If psychotherapy is successful, this will normally involve a certain amount of grief, as the client "lets go of" an old ideal, image, or habit pattern. In all counseling death is universally present. Either something has died, is about to die or needs to die. Therefore, grief is an essential part of all successful therapy. Gestalt therapy recognizes this same dynamic in its concept of "unfinished business." Stephen A. Tobin, a Gestalt therapist, writes:

The unfinished business can be between a parent and child, between spouses, between lovers, between friends, or between any other two people who have had an intense, long-standing relationship. . . . When the relationship ends--through death, divorce, one person moving away from the other, etc.--the relationship itself becomes unfinished. The individual is still carrying around much accumulated unexpressed emotion: old resentments, frustrations, hurts, guilts, and even unexpressed love and appreciation.²²

Gestalt techniques, like the fantasy dialogue, are designed to facilitate this grief process and enable people to finish the emotional business of a lost relationship.

The loss of a body part or bodily function is increasingly frequent with the advent of modern surgical techniques. Currently, there are over 35,000 limb amputations annually in the United States,²³ and

²¹Peretz, p. 6.

²²Stephen A. Tobin, "Saying Goodbye," in John O. Stevens (ed.) Gestalt Is (Moab, UT: Real People Press, 1975), p. 120.

²³Arthur C. Carr and Bernard Schoenberg, "Loss of External Organs: Limb Amputations, Mastectomy and Disfiguration," in Schoenberg, p. 119.

the incidence of mastectomies and hysterectomies has risen in recent years with the rise of cancer. Dr. Bernard Schoenberg, a physician and thanatologist, argues that all bodily losses involve changes to the patient's body image. This body image has an integrity and intactness that when broken by surgery leads to emotional confusion and self dis-fussion. He writes:

Even in well adjusted persons, . . . the almost universal reaction to such loss is that of grief, accompanied by depression and anxiety. On occasion, such emotions may be expressed only through somatic equivalents, but they are nevertheless invariably present in some form.²⁴

Other kinds of bodily losses, like the loss of a breast or uterus, involve even more complex changes in a woman's sense of identity, sexuality, worth, and relationships to her family. Schoenberg continues:

The emotional impact of a mastectomy . . . has a significance to a woman that transcends functional or cosmetic factors, since a breast, like the uterus, is far more likely to symbolize a woman's identity (femininity). Her reaction to losing a breast will therefore depend to a great extent on her feminine identity, which in turn is determined by her previous relationships with parents, other family members, and more currently her relationship with her husband.²⁵

The close similarity between the emotional response to the loss of a spouse and the loss of a limb has been confirmed by other researchers. One of the foremost British scholars in this field is Colin Murray Parkes who has widely studied grief in both widowed spouses and in the now famous St. Christopher Hospice for the terminally ill. After years of study, he argues that there are seven features of bereavement reactions. They are: the process of realization, an alarm reaction,

²⁴Ibid., p. 121.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 122-23.

an urge to search, anger and guilt, feelings of internal loss of self, identification phenomena, and pathological variants of grief. Carefully comparing each of these features with the research literature on the loss of limbs, he concludes:

Without placing too fine a point on it, it does seem that the psycho-social transition from being an intact person to being an amputee is a painful and time-consuming process which is, in many ways, similar to the transition from married person to widow or widower. It would seem justifiable, therefore, to regard these two situations as parts of the same field of study and to consider what can be learnt from one that would be of value in preventing or treating the pathological forms of reaction that can complicate the other.²⁶

One can also lose a certain role or status. Such changes might include loss of employment, the loss of status in one's employment; the loss of a role as spouse, student, parent, single person, etc. Employment changes are so frequent in this mobile society that one seldom thinks about them as involving grief. Even if one is moving into a better job, the leaving of the old position is not without its elements of grief. Ralph Click did an exploratory study²⁷ comparing these three types of change-loss experiences: loss of spouse through death, change to unemployment and employment in new position. With three groups of ten persons in each category, he both interviewed them and used the Multiple Affect Adjustment List to correlate results. He discovered a positive correlation between these three types of change-loss

²⁶Parkes, Bereavement, p. 189.

²⁷Ralph E. Click, "The Relationship Between Grief and Change: A Comparison of the Experiences of a Select Group of Bereaved, Unemployed and Employed in a New Position" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1973)

experiences. The two negative changes--death of spouse and unemployment--had the highest similarity of reactions; whereas the positive change experience--employment in new position--also involved the additional elements of nervousness, apprehension, fear. This study tended to confirm in an exploratory way his thesis that "major changes in a person's life are experienced as loss."²⁸ To the extent that any change is experienced as a loss, grief will be present.

Loss of External Objects

The third category of types of loss is the loss of external objects. These can be losses of such things as money, pets, special mementoes, home or even homeland. This latter loss has been portrayed dramatically in such nostalgic films as "Sound of Music" and "Gone With the Wind." The loss of one's homeland, even if by choice, can be a complex phenomenon also involving losses of roots, identity, support and familiarity. Emigrants to this country know the anguish of this kind of loss, and the paradoxical emotional urges of "hanging on" to the old and "fitting in" to the new.²⁹

The loss of one's home can be by disaster, by changing homes or by leaving home. "Home" often involves more than just a building, but also includes one's family, security, childhood, familiarity, etc. Each summer when the children go off to camp there is often a very common

²⁸Ibid., p. 155.

²⁹See Libuse Tyhurst, "Displacement and Migration: A Study in Social Psychiatry," American Journal of Psychiatry, CVII (1951), 561.

form of this type of grief, termed "homesickness." A more powerful form of "homesickness" that too many people underrate comes when a family moves. Often in this mobile society moving involves not just the loss of a home, but the loss of friends, one's school, one's neighborhood, one's church; and the loss of the familiarity of knowing where things are, the security of having established doctors, dentists, ministers, and the security of established routines. Marc Fried has studied the emotional-social factors among people who were forcibly displaced from their homes by urban redevelopment.³⁰ He writes:

But for the majority it seems quite precise to speak of their reactions as expressions of grief. These are manifest in the feelings of painful loss, the continued longing, the general depressive tone, frequent symptoms of psychological or social or somatic distress, the active work required in adapting to the altered situation, the sense of helplessness, the occasional expressions of both direct and displaced anger, and tendencies to idealize the lost place.³¹

He speculates that the power of human grief over a lost place is related to the human need for spatial identity, which corresponds to Erik Erikson's work in identity. He writes:

In fact, we might say that a sense of spatial identity is fundamental to human functioning. It represents a phenomenal or ideational integration of important experiences concerning environmental arrangements and contacts in relation to the individual's conception of his own body in space.³²

External objects can be lost in dramatic and sudden ways through a wide variety of natural disasters. Often these disasters involve the loss of friends and family as well as material possessions. It would not

³⁰Marc Fried, "Grieving for a Lost Home," in Leonard J. Duhl (ed.) The Urban Condition (New York: Basic, 1963)

³¹Ibid., p. 151.

³²Ibid., p. 156.

be surprising then, to find grief present in the survivors of various kinds of disasters. J. S. Tyhurst has studied the individual emotional reactions to various kinds of disasters.³³ He has isolated a three stage process: impact, recoil and post-traumatic, which is not unlike the grief process. He has labeled as "disaster syndrome" elements of this syndrome, guilt, recurring fears of catastrophic experience, withdrawal of emotional withdrawal, psychosomatic illness, not unlike grief elements. The Rev. Craig Jordan reports on the continuing emotional needs of the survivors of the Buffalo Creek Disaster in West Virginia.³⁴ He notes that one of the major emotional problems is the high portion of unresolved grief. He writes:

While grief is a problem with which most pastoral care professionals are familiar, its power and intensity is magnified many times in a disaster situation. . . . The incidence of features of pathological grief appears to be greater.³⁵

Disasters, such as the Buffalo Creek experience, involve the survivors in a complex and intense grief reaction, made so by the totality and suddenness of the loss.

C. GRIEF SYMPTOMATOLOGY

In response to the wide variety of types of loss or separation

³³James S. Tyhurst, "The Role of Transition States--Including Disasters in Mental Illness," in Dean E. Wooldridge (ed.) Symposium on Preventive and Social Psychiatry (Washington: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, 1957)

³⁴Craig Jordan, "Pastoral Care and Chronic Disaster Victims: The Buffalo Creek Experience," Journal of Pastoral Care, XXX:3 (1976), 159-70.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 162.

experiences, there are an equally wide variety of grief reactions and symptoms. There are such varied behavioral or symptom elements in or associated with grief that pinpointing the precise nature of grief has become a difficult task. The difficulty can best be described with the help of an analogy from the world of color. Certain colors--red, blue, black, yellow and white--are primary colors. All other colors--pink, green, brown, etc.--are secondary colors since they are derived from a blending of primary colors. Applied to grief, this analogy suggests the question--Is grief a primary or a secondary human emotion? Is grief a basic, pure, primary emotion or is it simply a cluster or blending of various primary emotions. This issue--whether grief is a single, primary emotion or simply a cluster of emotions--dominates any discussion of grief symptomology.

At one time or another nearly every human emotion or reaction has been associated with bereavement, but probably the predominating reaction is intense emotional pain, characterized by distress, deep sorrow, and painful regret. Initially the bereaved person experiences shock and numbness, especially if the loss is sudden or tragic. In the face of tragic and sudden pain, the psyche recoils. One is temporarily anesthetized. It has been described as being in a trance³⁶ or even "mildly drunk."³⁷ Such shock is necessary and not unlike the physical dynamics of shock. Bernadine Kreis writes:

³⁶Granger E. Westburg, Good Grief (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Press, 1962), p. 12.

³⁷Lewis, p. 7.

The necessity for shock in early grief can be compared to someone in great pain who 'passes out.' It is nature's way of protecting him from unbearable pain. After a death, the survivor 'passes out' until he is ready to face the fact that a loved one is dead.³⁸

Coupled with shock and numbness is disbelief and denial. Denial is also a reaction to intense and seemingly unbearable pain. Kübler-Ross writes: "Denial functions as a buffer after unexpected shocking news, allows the patient to collect himself and, with time, mobilize other, less radical defenses."³⁹

Soon, however, denial and numbness give way to or alternate with partial realizations of the painful loss. Here the characteristic human response is weeping, crying and wailing. As the painful loss is realized, the human psyche recoils with volatile emotions. The human facial expression of grief speaks to the deepest need to cry and is itself symbolic of the anguish of these hours. Tears are associated with grief, as laughter is with joy. Colin Parkes calls this psyche pain "pining," "the persistent and obtrusive wish for the person who is gone, a preoccupation with thoughts that can only give pain."⁴⁰ He argues that pining is "the subjective and emotional component of the urge to search for the lost object."⁴¹ This painful yearning, symbolically expressed in the human facial expression of grief and the painful sounds of weeping is not only present in all adult grief, but finds its origins in the human infant's reaction to separation from the

³⁸Bernadine Kreis and Alice Pattie, Up from Grief (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), p. 19.

³⁹Kübler-Ross, p. 39.

⁴⁰Parkes, Bereavement, p. 40.

⁴¹Ibid.

mothering one. John Bowlby, in his studies of separation anxiety in human and animal infants, notes the universal dual reactions of yearning and protest.⁴² In adults this urge to search for the lost love object can take dramatic and chronic forms as in spiritualism, in some suicide attempts, and in the role of the deceased's possessions for the survivor.

Coupled with emotional pain, many researchers have noted the symptoms of physical distress. In his classic study, Lindemann noted the somatic effects of normal grief.⁴³ He described them as "the marked tendency to sighing respiration" especially when discussing the loss, "the complaint about the lack of strength and exhaustion," and "a variety of digestive symptoms."⁴⁴ Paula J. Clayton, in her study⁴⁵ of normal grief, calls grief a "depressive complex" and lists also "loss of appetite and weight, sleep difficulties, fatigue, agitation, loss of interests in television, friends, and current events and general lack of concentration."⁴⁶ All of these symptoms can be considered normal grief symptomology.

Another aspect of the interrelationship between grief and physical symptoms is the role of grief in bringing on major illnesses. Rees and Lutkinds, are among several who have studied the relationship between bereavement and an increased frequency of death. In one of the

⁴²See John Bowlby, Attachment and Loss (New York: Basic, 1973)

⁴³Lindemann, p. 142.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 143.

⁴⁵Paula J. Clayton, et al., "Evidences of Normal Grief," in Austin H. Nutsche (ed.) Death and Bereavement (Springfield, IL: Thomas, 1969), pp. 168-73.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 168.

better controlled studies⁴⁷ the close relatives of 371 deceased persons were watched closely during the first year of their bereavement. Rees found that during that first year, the death rate among widowed people was 12.2 percent versus only 1.2 percent in the controlled group of the same age, sex, stress factors. In another study⁴⁸ of 4,486 widowers over the age of fifty-four, Michael Young and his colleagues discovered that during the first six months of bereavement the death rate of these men was almost forty per cent higher than that of married men the same age. Parkes has also conducted a tightly controlled study of the frequency of office visits among widowed people during the first year of bereavement. He concludes that "newly bereaved people do consult their doctors more often than they did before bereavement."⁴⁹ After a review of several other studies, Parkes concludes:

I accept the evidence that bereavement can affect physical health, and that complaints of somatic anxiety symptoms, headaches, digestive upsets, and rheumatism are likely, particularly in widows and widowers of middle age. Finally, there are certain potentially fatal conditions such as coronary thrombosis, blood cancers, and cancer of the neck and womb, which seem in some cases to be precipitated or aggravated by major losses.⁵⁰

During the first year of bereavement, following the loss of a loved person, the risk of serious illness⁵¹ and consequently of death is significantly greater. Dr. Peretz summarizes:

⁴⁷W. D. Rees and S. G. Lutkins, "Mortality of Bereavement," British Medical Journal, IV:3 (1967)

⁴⁸Michael Young, Bernard Benjamin, and Chris Wallis, "Mortality Rate of Widowers," Lancet, No. 272 (August 31, 1963)

⁴⁹Parkes, Bereavement, p. 19. ⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵¹The relationship of bereavement to cancer is most curious because in the past physicians have not considered an emotional component

Because loss is a universal experience, it may easily be overlooked as an etiologic agent in the production of disease and dysfunction. There is increasing evidence which assigns to it sometimes central, sometimes peripheral role in the pathogenesis and outcome of illness. The period of bereavement following loss of a loved or valued person is one of greater risk in terms of the precipitation of illness and death for the bereaved individual.⁵²

Another related symptom of grief is the presence of hallucinations and illusions, particularly in severe grief reactions. In the past there has been little understanding of the nature of hallucinations and illusions in grief, and as a consequence physicians have often hospitalized or severely drugged the bereaved as if they were insane. In recent years, the universal presence of illusionary and hallucinating experiences in intense grief reactions, have given them a more normal cast. Parkes found in his London Study of widows the common presence of illusionary experiences, and understood them as a function of the urge of search for the lost person. Their function was to "seem to minimize grief."⁵³ He concludes:

The sense of the presence of the dead husband is a common phenomenon. . . . Sometimes it consisted of a general feeling that the husband was somewhere near at hand; at other times he would be located in a specific place, a particular chair, a bedroom, or the grave in which his body was buried.⁵⁴

to cancer. Bernard Schoenberg, noted thanatologist, has reviewed the literature on the relationship between bereavement and cancer and concluded that while the evidence is "largely correlational" and does not prove cause and effect, "it does suggest that bereavement does contribute to a number of diverse somatic reactions, including cancer." Arthur C. Carr and Bernard Schoenberg, "Object-Loss and Somatic Symptom Formation" in Schoenberg, p. 47. See also L. L. LeShan and R. E. Wothington, "Personality as a Factor in the Pathogenesis of Cancer: A Review of the Literature," British Journal of Medical Psychology, XXIX (1956), 40.

⁵²Peretz, p. 6.

⁵³Parkes, Bereavement, p. 104.

⁵⁴Ibid.

In another carefully controlled British study⁵⁵ by W. Dewi Rees, hallucinations were simply defined as "a sense of the presence of the dead person." Rees interviewed some 293 widowed people and found that 46.7 per cent of them had such hallucinations of the dead person, and that among many these experiences regularly lasted for years. These hallucinations took a wide variety of forms, from visionary, auditory, tactile experiences, to direct conversations with the dead person. The important finding of this study was the friendly nature of these hallucinations. Most people reported that such experiences mitigated grief, gave them a sense that the dead loved one was "at peace," and gave them confidence, support, and a sense that they were not alone. Rees concludes: "It seems reasonable to conclude from these studies that hallucinations are normal experiences after widowhood, providing helpful psychological phenomena to these experiencing them."⁵⁶

Another cluster of grief symptoms has to do with anxiety. There is a remarkable similarity of symptoms between grief reactions and an intense anxiety attack. Tension, insomnia, restlessness, physical symptoms, anxiety dreams, inability to eat regularly are all symptoms of anxiety as well as grief. Furthermore, the typical defense mechanisms associated with anxiety in psychoanalytic literature, regression, denial, repression, identification, are all present in grief as well. An understanding of grief as a form of anxiety dates back to Sigmund

⁵⁵W. D. Rees, "The Bereaved and Their Hallucinations," in Bernard Schoenberg, et al. (eds) Bereavement (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), pp. 66-71.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 70.

Freud, who saw its origin in the infant's psychic pain when separated from his/her mother.⁵⁷ Grief as "separation anxiety" has been documented experimentally in modern times by John Bowlby's studies of temporary separations of infants from their mothers.⁵⁸ David Switzer, however, has built the most comprehensive theoretical basis for grief as separation anxiety:

In light of the definition of anxiety as being essentially the fear response to separation from a significant other and the universal recognition of grief as a broken human relationship . . . the conclusion seems inescapable that at the very center of grief is separation anxiety. Grief is one among many of a lifetime of separation experiences, each stimulating reactions of anxiety, differing in intensity because of a variety of factors, yet all being of basically the same order.⁵⁹

Parkes prefers to treat the anxiety symptoms of grief in another context. He understands the anxiety component of grief as "alarm."⁶⁰ Building on an evolutionary model and upon studies of crisis and alarm reactions in animals, Parkes suggests that these anxiety symptoms are best understood as signs of alarm, and in previous eons they mobilized the human animal with appropriate approach/avoidance behavior that guaranteed his/her survival. He writes:

. . . bereavement evokes arousal and the responses that characterize the alarm reaction; it may also evoke approach or avoidance

⁵⁷Sigmund Freud, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works (New York: Macmillan, 1961), XX:170ff.

⁵⁸See Bowlby.

⁵⁹David K. Switzer, The Dynamics of Grief (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 105-6.

⁶⁰See chapter three of Parkes, Bereavement, p. 29ff.

behavior; and the form of these responses will tend to take will be partly stressor-specific . . . and partly subject-specific.⁶¹

However anxiety is understood, typical symptoms are a major and normal component of grief reactions.

The presence of anger or hostility in normal grief reactions has been documented by nearly every researcher and writer in the field of bereavement.⁶² Anger seems to be a normal and inevitable part of grief. Anger can be expressed symptomologically as self-recriminations, guilt, general irritability, revenge, over aggression, depression and even suicide. Anger is particularly magnified in the grief following divorces where the loss can be compounded by years of bitterness, mutual destructiveness and entanglements. Anger is equally magnified in losses that are tragic, like losses in the prime of life or in youth.⁶³ Kübler-Ross makes anger an important stage unto itself in her studies of the terminally ill, and without its expression and resolution, she feels true acceptance of one's death cannot be reached.⁶⁴ Switzer emphasizes that anger is inevitably involved in grief because every relationship is full of ambivalent feelings. He writes:

Ambivalence, including hostility and aggression, is inevitably a motivating force in every meaningful relationship, growing out of the most original significant relation with the mother and the

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 37-38.

⁶²See David Peretz, "Reaction to Loss," in Schoenberg, Loss and Grief, p. 22.

⁶³See John E. Schowalter, "The Child's Reaction to His Own Terminal Illness" in Schoenberg, Loss and Grief, p. 51ff, or Jerry W. Wiener, "Reaction of the Family to the Fatal Illness of a Child," in Schoenberg, Loss and Grief, p. 87ff.

⁶⁴See chapter four of Kübler-Ross, p. 50ff.

inability of any person to fulfill consistently all of the pressing needs of another, arousing fear of loss of support and a tendency toward aggression.⁶⁵

But more than a mere product of an ambivalent relationship, anger can be understood as "protest" over the very act of separation or loss itself. In the studies of grief as separation anxiety in human infants, Bowlby identifies "protest" as the initial response to separation.⁶⁶ This protest, expressed as crying, yelling, resistance, is at the very event of separation or loss itself. It is the child's way of punishing the mother, and attempting to insure that she will not leave again.

Parkes also makes anger central to his understanding of grief. He reports that there was an almost universal acknowledgement of anger by all bereaved people in his studies.⁶⁷ Like other writers, he emphasizes that anger is not a continuous state nor is it a clearly definable stage, but rather, it seems to come and go like the cycles of grief itself. One of the difficulties of anger is that it is often displaced and not directly toward the object for which it was intended. This is especially true in the case of death, where anger at the deceased is often felt to be unacceptable. Thus, the closest relatives, friends, and helping professionals of the bereaved are often the undeserving objects of this anger.

When there are strong prohibitions against the expression of anger, the bereaved can internalize the anger, resulting in forms of depression. Most researchers place depression, which is also a common

⁶⁵Switzer, p. 129.

⁶⁶Bowlby, p. 29.

⁶⁷Parkes, Bereavement, p. 79.

symptom of grief, here in the context of anger. It is important, however, from the vantage point of this author, that a careful distinction is made between depression and despair. Depression, as noted, is often a product of internalized anger. Despair, however, is best understood as hopelessness or meaninglessness, and therefore best placed in the later discussion of existential anxiety. Nevertheless, both depression and despair are present in grief reactions, and in the life of the average widowed person they are experienced similarly.

Another significant emotion that is almost universally present in grief is guilt. Most researchers and writers in the field of bereavement, especially in studying adult bereavement through death, note the centrality and inevitability of guilt feelings. For example, in Parkes' London study of twenty-two middle aged widows he noted that thirteen of them expressed self-reproachful ideas at some time in the course of the first year.⁶⁸ In the mildest form this was no more than a tendency to go over the events of the death in order, apparently to seek reassurance that all was done that could have been done. In more extreme forms, griever's perceive the loss as divine punishment upon them, or conclude personal failure. Guilt can be recognized behaviorally with a wide variety of expressions: self punishment, self-justifying behaviors, ritualized obsessions, depression, compensation, ostentatious funerals, or undue hostility.

Most researchers understand guilt's role in grief to be related

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 83.

to the universality of ambivalence. Edgar Jackson writes that "Ambivalence is a by-product of love. Wherever love exists there is also a certain amount of reaction against it, for love demands limitations on freedom and responsibility."⁶⁹ If every relationship is characterized by ambivalent feelings of both genuine caring and hostility, to the extent that the latter is present, in a relationship the resultant grief would be compounded by guilt. Switzer writes of this relationship between guilt and hostility in grief:

Hostility which inevitably arises out of the interaction in any close, meaningful emotional relationship, thus creating ambivalent feelings, further threatens the relationships and is productive of guilt-anxiety. Guilt, then, as anxiety is inescapable as an aspect of the anxiety of grief itself.⁷⁰

This understanding of guilt's role in grief dates back to Freud, who argued that guilt in grief is a reflection of the unconscious wish for another's death.⁷¹ While few still hold to the validity of a universal "death wish," they do argue for the universality of ambivalent feelings in any meaningful relationship, and therefore for the inevitability of guilt in grief reactions.

There is also a cluster of grief symptoms that have been categorized under existential terminology. Switzer is one writer who categorizes these symptoms:

At the core of existential anxiety are the threats to the individual implied in loss of meaning, the experience of emptiness, the anxiety

⁶⁹Edgar Jackson, Understanding Grief (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 89.

⁷⁰Switzer, p. 131.

⁷¹See Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in his Collected Papers (New York: Basic, 1959), IV, 152-72.

of the responsibility for himself in his freedom, the dread of recognition of his own finitude, the possibility of his own non-being, fear of concerning his own dying.⁷²

Switzer is not alone here. The modern existentialist tradition, including Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger and Paul Tillich, understands the existential crisis of nonbeing as including many of these elements. Nevertheless, for purposes of clarification, these several spiritual symptoms that accompany the crisis of bereavement shall be isolated.

First there is in grief the element of the fear of one's own death or what is commonly called existential or ontological anxiety. Every death, no matter how distant reminds others of their own eventual fate. Every loss, no matter how small, is related to all other losses. Peretz writes:

Each loss carries with it the threat of additional or future loss. For example, serious loss of health may lead to loss of skills, loss of job, loss of role as breadwinner, and real or anticipated loss of respect from others.⁷³

Ultimately every loss reminds others that life is by nature finite, and some day every object of love will be lost. Thus, the ontological anxiety is present in grief reactions. The pastoral counselors have been particularly perceptive in pointing to this element in grief. Paul Irion lists the fear of death among the dynamic forces in grief. This ontological fear is described as "a fear which has its roots in the very nature of man's being as a finite creature."⁷⁴ Such ontological

⁷²Switzer, p. 175-76.

⁷³Peretz, p. 6.

⁷⁴Paul Irion, The Funeral and the Mourners (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 48.

anxiety inevitably confronts an individual with a "crisis of meaning" in which questions regarding the nature and purpose of life are foremost.

The second area is what this author calls the "meaning crisis." In any grief experience, especially in the death of a loved one, there is a loss of meaning, sense of purpose and values. Humans find meaning and value in those things or persons with whom they are emotionally attached. When that attachment is lost or broken, there is a temporary loss of meaning. Early researchers such as Thomas Eliot in the 1940s have noted what he called "the sense of emptiness, deadness and futility" in normal grief reactions.⁷⁵ Recent researchers, such as Parkes, describe the meaning crisis this way:

But the world of the bereaved person is in chaos. Because he is striving to find what cannot be found he ignores what can be found. He feels as if the most central, important aspect of himself is gone and all that is left is meaningless and irrelevant--hence the world itself has become meaningless and irrelevant.⁷⁶

Again pastoral counselors have been particularly sensitive to this meaning dimension of grief. Edgar Jackson has argued that a person's structure of values plays a significant role in grief.⁷⁷ If a person has no clearly thought out value structure, then his/her grief is intensified by the loss of meaning as well as the loved one. Conversely, an increase of meaning produces a reduction in grief's intensity. Frankl, from the standpoint of a secular psychotherapy, has called

⁷⁵Thomas D. Eliot, "Bereavement, Inevitable but Not Insurmountable," in Lloward Becker and Reuban Hill (eds.) Family, Marriage and Parenthood (Boston: Heath, 1948), p. 653.

⁷⁶Parkes, Bereavement, p. 77. ⁷⁷Jackson, p. 102ff.

attention to this same crucial role of meaning in human health.⁷⁸ He developed a whole system of psychotherapy called logotherapy based upon this human need for meaning. He also notes that through his own personal concentration camp experience that an encounter with death--one's own or another's--aggravates this need for meaning.

Thirdly, grief reactions also include a crisis of hope. Because meaning is temporarily lapsed hope is also momentarily lost. The absence of hope is a key element in despair and apathy, both of which are also present in grief reactions. Parkes has noted that "periods of apathetic withdrawal following intense pangs of grief."⁷⁹ Bowlby in his studies of separation anxiety in infants, notes that after the initial phase of yearning and protest, infants often respond to their mother's return with marked detachment and apathy, ignoring of her presence.⁸⁰

Several researchers have noted the connection between bereavement and suicide. The suicide rates for widowed people during the first year of bereavement are dramatically higher than for married people of their same age and status.⁸¹ Suicide is the third ranking cause of death in widowed men.⁸² Even among divorced people which is

⁷⁸Victor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962).

⁷⁹Parkes, Bereavement, p. 86. ⁸⁰Bowlby, p. 26.

⁸¹Jessie Barnard, The Future of Marriage (New York: Bantam, 1972), p. 20.

⁸²Howard W. Stone, Suicide and Grief (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 57.

also a type of bereavement, Durkheim reported that the suicide rate is four times that of married people.⁸³ One possible explanation for this connection is the role of hopelessness in grief. Maurice Farber has called suicide "a disease of hope" and listed hopelessness as the key element in suicide.⁸⁴ He goes on to say that hope is a function of both the situation and competence. If hopelessness is a significant factor in suicide, then we should not be surprised to find an increase of suicide rates among the bereaved who experience a crisis of hope.

This fascinating relationship between hope, suicide and grief was explored by Warren Breed in a study of suicide victims in New Orleans.⁸⁵ He noted first the frequency of experiences of loss prior to successful attempts at suicide. He was particularly interested to learn the types of loss that more severely influenced men or women. He found that for suicides by men, the loss of position was the most severe factor in motivating their suicide. For women it was the loss of a person, by death or divorce, that was the most severe factor in their attempts. In either case, significant loss was the precipitating situation that brought on the crisis of hope, and thereby the greater probability of suicide.

Grief also has a social dimension, expressed graphically in the mourning customs, rituals and norms of a given culture. These rituals and customs of grief are prescribed by the culture of sub-culture in

⁸³Emile Durkheim, Suicide (New York: Free Press, 1951), p. 192.

⁸⁴Maurice L. Farber, Theory of Suicide (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968), p. 12.

⁸⁵Warren Breed, "Suicide and Loss in Social Interaction," in E. S. Scheidman (ed.) Essays in Self-Destruction (New York: Science House, 1967), pp. 190-97.

which the bereaved lives. While grief rituals and customs serve many functions, from a sociological point of view they provide for the group's acknowledgement of the change in role and status of the bereaved. This is often illustrated graphically in the change in titles, as from wife to widow, from wife to divorcee, from son to father, from single to married, from person to cripple, from New Yorker to California.

Grief always involves changes in the griever's roles, status and habits. A widow loses not only a husband, but possibly a provider, a sexual partner, a companion, an accountant, a gardner, a babysitter, an audience, a bed-warmer as well. Her grief process will inevitably involve changes in her roles and habits in order to adjust to the loss of her husband's roles. Similarly, other kinds of losses, like of a limb, a house, a friend, also involve changes in habits, patterns and roles. Developmental losses, like the retirement, involve changes in one's role, status and habits of behavior. In each case before the new roles and habits are established, there are painful periods of disorganization and role confusion. This social process parallels the emotional process of grief work.

Understanding grief from a sociological perspective, as changes in roles and habits, dates back to the work of Eliot who did one of the first sociological appraisals of society's help for the bereaved. He defined grief in a sociological way: "Psychologically, bereavement is a major type in the general class of traumatic frustration-situation. Arrested impulses or thwarted habit is at the root of all sorrow."⁸⁶

⁸⁶Eliot, p. 643.

Similarly, Leonard Roland in the 1920s also talked about the natural building up of conditioned patterns of and habits of relating to another person or situation. Then, when that relationship is broken by death, divorce or absence the patterns are frustrated. This creates tension and confusion which are evident in grief. He defined grief as "an affective state resulting from the removal of an accustomed stimulus which strongly conditions one or more positive retroflex mechanism."⁸⁷

The "father of modern sociology," Emile Durkheim, also wrote about role confusion and transitions. He coined the term "anomie" which is a French term for normlessness. In his classic study of suicide, he classified a type of suicide, anomie suicide⁸⁸ that he determined was highly correlated to being in a state of anomie. He noted that anomie rose during times of economic uncertainties and was generally on the increase in modern mass urban societies. But besides this societal anomie, there was also a kind of domestic anomie, created by a sudden life change in one's marital status. Noting that the suicide rates of widowed and divorced persons were higher than married people of their same age, he posited that the bereaved experienced a kind of anomie immediately upon the loss of their spouse. He writes:

The suicides occurring at the crisis of widowhood . . . are really due to domestic anomie resulting from the death of husband or wife. A family catastrophe occurs which affects the survivor. He is not

⁸⁷Leonard Troland, The Fundamentals of Human Motivation (New York: Van Nostrand, 1928), p. 448.

⁸⁸Durkheim, p. 241ff. See also Barbara G. Cashion, "Durkheim's Concept of Anomie and Its Relation to Divorce," Sociology and Social Research, LV (October 1970), 72-81.

adapted to the new situation in which he finds himself and accordingly offers less resistance to suicide.⁸⁹

From this survey of grief symptomology, the wide range of grief symptoms is clear. The question of the precise nature of grief may seem even more bewildering now. Researchers have split in their conclusions regarding the nature of grief. Some have looked beneath the bewildering array of symptomology, to find the pure kernel of grief as a single primary emotion. Others have been content to label grief a cluster of secondary emotions.

In general, this author favors the latter point of view, but the really significant insight of this survey is often overlooked by this debate. This simple but profound insight is that grief is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Grief is of course primarily an emotional phenomenon, expressed in the anger, pain, guilt and anxiety. However, grief also has a physical dimension, expressed in hallucinations, ailments and the increased risk of illness; and a spiritual dimension, expressed in the meaning-crisis, hopelessness and ontological anxiety; and a social dimension, expressed in the rituals, role changes and identity reformulations. Therefore any full understanding of the nature and dynamics of grief must begin with this simple, but profound observation.

D. GRIEF AS PROCESS

In spite of the wide variety of grief symptoms, scholars and writers in the area of bereavement are almost universally agreed on one

⁸⁹Durkheim, p. 259.

fact: that grief is a process. Like any process, grief has a starting point (the loss/separation), a series of successive "stages," and an ending point (restoration/recovery). Colin Parkes begins his recent book by highlighting this very fact:

. . . grief is a process and not a state. Grief is not a set of symptoms which start after a loss and then gradually fade away. It involves a succession of clinical pictures which blend into and replace one another.⁹⁰

Grief is not a single state that is clearly recognizable from moment to moment, but a dynamic, changing process, more varied and complex in its many forms than any single emotion could ever be.⁹¹ Yet while it is frustrating to writers who attempt to categorize grief's "stages," this dynamic character of grief can offer growth and novelty to the griever. Toward the end of his personal diary of grief, C. W. Lewis poetically captures the process nature of his inner journey:

I thought I could describe a state; make a map of sorrow. Sorrow, however, turns out to be not a state but a process. It needs not a map but a history. . . . There is something new to be chronicled every day. Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape.⁹²

Like every process, the grief process has a directionality and a goal that continuously ties together its many forms and elements.

⁹⁰Parkes, Bereavement, pp. 6-7.

⁹¹Given the multidimensional character of grief discussed in the last section and its predominant process character to be discussed in this section, the simple abstract term "grief" is an inaccurate description of this phenomenon. There is no such thing as grief. There is only "the grief process." Unfortunately the grammar is often difficult. The reader needs to understand that when this author hereafter writes "grief" he means "the grief process."

⁹²Lewis, p. 47.

Most scholars and writers also agree that the grief process varies greatly according to a number of factors. Those factors include: the manner of death or loss; the intensity of attachment feelings;⁹³ the griever's social and cultural milieu;⁹⁴ the resources available to the griever; the griever's typical coping patterns in past losses;⁹⁵ the timing⁹⁶ and opportunity for anticipatory grief.⁹⁷ Each of these factors will influence the length of the grief process, its expressions, the presence and type of defenses, and the relative intensity of various "stages." For example, a death by suicide tends to increase the intensity of guilt in the survivors.⁹⁸ Or, a sudden unexpected death of a vital family member tends to increase the elements of shock and anger, in contrast to the gradual expected death of an older member of the same family. There is also some research evidence to suggest that grievers without adequate support systems, left to mourn in isolation, grieve longer and more pathologically than persons adequately supported by comforters and ritualistic structures.⁹⁹

⁹³See Parkes, Bereavement, p. 120ff.

⁹⁴Kübler-Ross is very articulate regarding the influence of a death-denying culture on the grief process. See "Attitudes Toward Death and Dying," in her On Death and Dying, p. 11ff.

⁹⁵Westburg, p. 3ff.

⁹⁶Parkes, Bereavement, p. 137ff.

⁹⁷By categorizing these factors ahead of time, Robert Fulton has classified people and potential losses as "high grief potential" and "low grief potential." See R. and J. Fulton, "Psychological Aspects of Terminal Care: Anticipatory Grief," Omega, II:2 (May 1971), 91-101.

⁹⁸See Stone, p. 96ff.

⁹⁹For example, John J. Schwab, et al., "Studies in Grief," or David Maddison and Beverley Raphael, "Conjugal Bereavement," in Schoenberg, Bereavement, p. 78ff.

A chief task of many writers in the area of bereavement has been to categorize the "stages" that the average griever goes through in the course of the "normal" grief process. Several writers, especially in the field of pastoral care, have listed numerous "stages." Granger Westburg has listed ten steps: shock, expression of emotions, depression, physical symptoms of distress, panic, guilt, anger, immobilization, hope and affirmation of reality.¹⁰⁰ In an early work by Wayne Oates, he poetically listed six stages: "the shocking blow of grief," "the numbing effect of the shock," "the struggle between fantasy and reality," "the break-through of a flood of grief," "selective memory and stabbing pain," and "the acceptance of loss and affirmation of life."¹⁰¹ In a more contemporary book, ex-priest Robert Kavanaugh listed these seven stages: shock, disorganization, volatile emotions, guilt, loss and loneliness, relief and reestablishment.¹⁰² The trouble with all of these "longer" lists of stages, is that they are often like mixing "apples and oranges." Many of these so-called "stages" occur simultaneously and out of order. In Wayne Oates' most recent book on separation and grief, he corrects his earlier naivete:

Consequently the process of grief and separation may not be regarded as involving as easily timed step-by-step procession of developmental stages, always distinct, sequential, and easily identifiable. In any given instance the stages of reaction flow together in confusion from time to time.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰Westburg.

¹⁰¹Wayne E. Oates, Anxiety in Christian Experience (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955)

¹⁰²Robert Kavanaugh, Facing Death (Baltimore: Penguin, 1974)

¹⁰³Wayne E. Oates, Pastoral Care and Counseling in Grief and Separation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

Nevertheless, understanding grief as a series of successive stages has been helpful in providing a distinction between normal and pathological grief. In each of these cases, normal-healthy grief is understood as a movement through these stages. Conversely, pathological or abnormal grief is understood as a "getting stuck" or fixated at one particular stage. The key variable, then, is timing. Denial would be normal within the first days, but abnormal after two months. Anger would be normal within the first few months, but abnormal if it continued for years. This view of normal/abnormal grief as a function of the timing of the grief process has done much to dislodge the earlier view of normal/abnormal grief that was based upon cultural norms and personal distastes.

Parenthetically, perhaps a word needs to be said about the average length of the grief process. Many religious traditions, like the Jewish mourning period of one full year, recognize that mourning is not over until the first year anniversary of the loved one's death. Dr. Herman Feifel, an early writer in the area of death and bereavement, has frequently supported the idea of one full year for the mourning the death of a significant other.¹⁰⁴ In recent times, Peretz has supported that idea, while noting that the acute phase is the first two months.¹⁰⁵ Lily Pincus in her new book, Death and the Family, has advocated a similar full year.¹⁰⁶ In our culture that shortchanges and denies the

¹⁰⁴Herman H. Feifel, "Death--Center Stage," Jewish Funeral Director, XXIV (1974), 17.

¹⁰⁵Peretz, p. 25.

¹⁰⁶Lily Pincus, Death and the Family (New York: Vintage), p. 124.

importance of grief, such statements are a helpful counterbalance. However any discussion of "averages" can set up legalities in the mind of the bereaved, who might then fear that he/she is abnormal because his/her grief process is behind or ahead of schedule.

Researchers who have worked with the empirical studies of grief and bereavement tend to favor a 3-4 stage listing of the grief process. John Bowlby suggests that there are three stages: 1) urge to recover lost object (weeping and anger); 2) despair (later called disorganization); and 3) "reorganization directed towards a new object."¹⁰⁷ Colin Parkes' stages--1) numbness, 2) yearning, 3) disorganization and despair, and 4) reorganization--closely parallel Bowlby as the two men share a common theoretical model.¹⁰⁸ Bernadine Kreis and Alice Pattie, who polled some 500 people for their study, posit three basic stages: shock, suffering and recovery.¹⁰⁹ James S. Tyhurst, who works with the traumatic grief involved in community disasters suggests three stages: 1) impact (psychologically stunned and bewildered); recoil (need to ventilate emotions) and post-traumatic (recovery).¹¹⁰ Finally, David Fulcomer¹¹¹ documented four stages: 1) immediate stage (shock), 2)

¹⁰⁷John Bowlby, "Process of Mourning," in Willard Gaylin (ed.) The Meaning of Despair (New York: Science House, 1968), p. 314.

¹⁰⁸Colin M. Parkes, "Seeking and Finding a Lost Object," Social Science and Medicine, IV (1970), 196.

¹⁰⁹Kreis and Pattie, p. 11.

¹¹⁰James S. Tyhurst, p. 150.

¹¹¹David Fulcomer, "The Adjustive Behavior of Some Recently Bereaved Spouses: A Psycho-Sociological Study" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1942).

post immediate stage (to end of funeral), 3) transitional stage, and 4) repatterning. These three-to-four stage lists are usually less self-contradictory and more adequately documented by empirical data than the "longer" lists. Nevertheless, any set of "stages" is not to be understood with rigid legality. The clear witness of these stages is to the overwhelming process of character of grief, and not to any fixed pattern.

Still further subtleties of the grief process were brought to light initially by Erich Lindemann. Rather than a clear distinct succession of stages, Lindemann described grief's process as a series of "waves lasting from twenty minutes to an hour at a time. . . ."112

Kreis has described these same waves:

It is much like the rise and fall of waves hitting against the shore. There is the crash of an oncoming wave and the lull as it recedes. Suffering is like that. It comes and goes in waves of pain, then recedes only to return, deep and penetrating, but never constant.¹¹³

Colin Parkes has argued that these waves are best understood as a series of "pangs" regularly alternated by several "mitigations" or defense mechanisms. Psychic pain can be integrated only in small regular amounts. This is the positive function of defense mechanisms--to regulate the amount of painful material admitted into the psyche. The defense mechanisms--denial, repression, regression, identification--are not blocks to the grief process but an integral part of the healing process. He writes:

In short, it seems to me that most of the phenomena we lump together as defenses have an important function in helping to regulate the

¹¹²Lindemann, p. 2.

¹¹³Kreis and Pattie, p. 26.

quantity of novel, unorganized or in other respects disabling information an individual is handling at a given time.¹¹⁴

Parkes' description of the conflictual nature of the grief as a kind of "push and pull" process is helpful. Two forces are operative in the grief process--the growth force striving to make psychic adjustment to reality, and the resistive force mitigating pain by clinging to what was loss.

One of the most vivid illustrations of the process character of grief was in a study of its absence. Helene Deutsch, an early psychoanalyst, did such a study¹¹⁵ of mourners who showed no overt signs of grief. She noted that even where there seemed to be no overt expressions of grief, "unmanifested grief will be expressed to the full in one way or another."¹¹⁶ This is true because all affect has a "striving for realization."¹¹⁷ Therefore, grief reactions "must be carried to completion."¹¹⁸ If one attempts to deny, block or otherwise delay his/her grief, "the flight from the suffering of grief is but a temporary gain, because . . . the necessity to mourn persists in the psychic apparatus."¹¹⁹ Deutsch's work illustrates the directionality and teleological functioning of grief. Grief by its very nature strives toward expression and a psychic balancing of the individual. The grief process has a directionality, and the goal of that directionality

¹¹⁴See chapter five of Parkes, Bereavement, p. 57ff.

¹¹⁵Helene Deutsch, "The Absence of Grief," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, VI (1937), 13-23.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 22.

seems to be emotional health.

As grief completes its process, the signs of recovery or restoration are unmistakable. The two key features which mark the completion of grief's work are: 1) the emotional detachment from the loss object and 2) the emotional reinvestment in new relationships.¹²⁰ Lindemann touched on both of these features when he described the signs of grief's completion as "emancipation from the bondage to the deceased, readjustment to the environment in which the deceased is missing, and the formation of new relationships."¹²¹ Similarly, Roy and Jane Nichols write: "The ultimate goal of the grief work is to be able to remember without emotional pain and to be able to reinvest emotional surpluses."¹²²

Writing about the first feature, Parkes describes the recovered griever as able "to remember without pain."¹²³ He/She no longer has "selective memory" that blocks out painful memories. But besides being clear, memory in the recovered griever is also accurate. The tendency to idealize the deceased or what was lost fades away. The recovered griever remembers both the good and the bad of what is now loss, and accepts it as such. In writing about divorce, Mel Krantzler suggests that a clear memory would be reflected in the absence of bitterness and

¹²⁰On the basis of the attachment model of grief to be explained in detail later.

¹²¹Lindemann, p. 142.

¹²²Roy Nichols and Jane Nichols, "Funerals: A Time for Grief and Growth," in Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (ed.) Death: The Final Stage of Growth (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. 87ff.

¹²³Parkes, Bereavement, p. 68.

sexual stereotyping about the lost loved one.¹²⁴ He further suggests that once the ego is free from the "painful colorings" of the past, it is also free to choose the future. This brings us to our second feature, the investment in new relationships. As the griever's emotional energy is reclaimed, it is free for new investments. Grievers that freely invest themselves in new loved relationships, new jobs, new friends, and commitments, are indicating that their grief work is completed. The common element here is an embracing of the future, made possible by a "letting go" of the past.¹²⁵

E. GRIEF AS REACTION TO LOSS

One of the major approaches to understanding grief is to conceive of grief as an emotional reaction to the loss of a valued thing or person. One of the leading exponents of this understanding of grief is Dr. David Peretz, who has worked and written extensively about losses related to physical and developmental changes. He defines loss this way:

Loss may be defined as a state of being deprived of or being without something one has had. While certain losses are necessary concomitants to growth and are predictable, others are haphazard

¹²⁴ Mel Krantzler, Creative Divorce (New York: New American Library, 1973), p. 94-95.

¹²⁵ An additional word should be said about the anticipatory grief of a terminally ill person which seems at first unable by its very nature to be able to complete its process. Yet, as Kübler-Ross notes, the real aim of anticipatory grief is the acceptance of one's death and the "letting go" of one's attachment to life. To a limited degree the future here too can be embraced--by the accepting and even the active "going out to meet" one's death.

and unpredictable. Losses may be sudden or gradual, traumatic or nontraumatic.¹²⁶

He goes on to classify losses into four categories: loss of individuals, loss of aspects of self, loss of external objects and developmental losses. He then defines "bereavement as the state of thought, feeling, and activity which is a consequence of the loss of a loved or valued object."¹²⁷ Grief, as a normal part of bereavement, is an emotional reaction to loss.

Those portions of the medical community which work with the losses of body parts or functions find this approach to grief especially relevant. Dr. Bernard Schoenberg, noted physician and thanatologist, writes:

Although the concept of loss is generally discussed in relation to dying and death, physicians must frequently treat patients who have experienced many other kinds of significant loss, often ones related to the body, its parts, and their functioning. Such losses include, among others, those involving the external bodily organs such as occur through limb amputation, mastectomy and bodily disfiguration.¹²⁸

The reaction due to the loss of body parts or functions is similar to that due to the loss of other external objects, like one's home, furniture or other belongings. In both cases grief is the normal emotional reaction to the loss of the things one has "possessed."

This understanding of grief as a reaction to a loss, suggests that grief is best characterized as a "searching." As with any object that is momentarily lost, one's initial reaction is "an urge to search

¹²⁶Peretz, pp. 4-5.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 20.

¹²⁸Carr and Schoenberg, p. 119.

for what is lost."¹²⁹ Parkes has argued that this urge to search characterizes all initial stages of bereavement. According to Parkes, typical searching behaviors include: anxiety, restlessness, preoccupation with lost person, development of a perceptual set for that person, loss of interest in normal activities, focus of attention toward those parts of the environment in which the lost person is likely to be, call for the lost person.¹³⁰ Parkes further suggests that this searching instinct has its roots in the animal heritage and can still be identified in most bereaved animals. Such an instinct would of course have been a clear evolutionary advantage. Grief, especially in its initial stages is best understood as an expression of this urge to search for what is lost. Only later, as the finality of the loss is fully realized, is "the search" gradually given up and the loss fully accepted.

This understanding of grief as a reaction to loss expands one's understanding and sensitivity to the great variety of loss dynamics. Life is filled with an infinite variety of losses, some major, many more gradual and routine, but each one being potentially an occasion for grief. Mel Krantzler, for example, writes about separation/divorce as a kind of "crisis of loss." He places this crisis within the wider context of life many other crises:

Divorce is by no means the only crisis of loss. Other losses can produce the same kind of emotional turmoil: a woman discovers a tumor on her left breast, a middle aged man loses his job, a hurricane levels a town on the Texas coast, a young husband is reported missing in action, a child dies. Like divorce, these are all crises of loss which trigger a similar kind of disruption of identity, upsurges of feelings from the past, and heightened emotional energies.¹³¹

¹²⁹Parkes, Bereavement, p. 40. ¹³⁰Ibid. ¹³¹Krantzler, p. 39.

Given this wider sensitivity to loss experiences, one can see any life-change event as a loss event, and therefore potentially a grief experience. Rahe and Holmes have developed a scale of life-change events which measures the relative intensity of various life change events. It is interesting to note among life-change events rated as most intense, the predominance of loss/separation events, such as death of spouse (100), divorce (73), marital separation (65), jail term (63), death of close friend (63), etc.¹³² Ralph Click suggested the thesis that "all change tends to be experienced as loss."¹³³ Building upon the work of Rahe and Holmes, Click compared three types of life-change events--death of spouse, loss of job, and employment in a new position. While he found close emotional parallels among all three experiences, the positive life change event--the employment in a new position--was experienced less in terms of loss and grief, and also carried new emotional elements like anxiety.¹³⁴ The prospect that not all life changes are universally experienced as loss, points out the theoretical inadequacy of defining grief in terms of loss. In the pastoral care community, Granger Westburg has articulated the understanding of grief as a reaction to loss in his widely read book. He understands grief as an emotional reaction to the loss of anything important to that person. As such, grief is a natural and inevitable part of human existence. He sets his discussion of the loss of a loved one within the context of

¹³²See Holmes and Rahe, p. 213ff.

¹³³Click, p. 1.

¹³⁴Ibid. See pp. 123-32.

the countless thousands of "little griefs" of everyday life. His fascinating thesis is that "how you handle these 'little griefs' will in some measure tell how you will probably handle the larger griefs when they come."¹³⁵ A pastor or other professional could assess the griever's ability to cope with a present traumatic loss by assessing how they handled previous minor loss experiences. Such a relatively quick assessment could aid the pastor in selecting the appropriate helping strategy.

A theoretical understanding of grief as an emotional reaction to loss has many advantages. As noted, it suggests that grief can be understood as a reflection of the urge to search for the lost object. It opens up for examination the vast universality of loss experiences in human life, and thus builds theoretical bridges to those studying life-change events and developmental crises. Understanding grief in this way also seems relevant to the grief involved in the loss of body parts or external possessions.

However, the theoretical inadequacies of this approach to grief are equally clear. Grief is defined primarily in terms of the event that initiates it, rather than in terms of the emotional dynamics themselves. The urge to search for what is lost, while a helpful description of grief, does not account for all grief symptomatology. Grief is understood in terms of its past, rather than in terms of its present dynamics or its future goals. This becomes especially clear in any discussion of "anticipatory grief"--the grief that begins "in

¹³⁵Westburg, p. 3.

anticipation of" the loss which has not yet occurred. In most discussions of grief as loss reaction, anticipatory grief is treated as a theoretical "exception to the rule" rather than an integral part of the theory.

Furthermore, understanding grief as an emotional reaction to loss does not fully account for why some losses are not grieved. Contrary to Click's thesis, not all changes are experienced as loss. Many deaths, as Glenn Davidson has pointed out in his new book¹³⁶ are experienced as triumphs, conflicts, sufferings as well as loss and change. Neither are all life change events experienced as losses. Many are welcomed with relief, others feared with anxiety, and still others resisted as losses. What one person experiences as loss, another person might experience as relief. Grief is in part due to the meaning one assigns to the particular object or person lost.

F. GRIEF AS SEPARATION ANXIETY

Another major approach to understanding grief is to conceive of grief as "separation anxiety." This view is strongest among the psychoanalytic writers, but in recent years has received its best formulation from pastoral theologian, David Switzer,¹³⁷ currently of the Perkins School of Theology. Actually, understanding grief as separation anxiety was not Freud's predominant view. He preferred to conceive of grief in terms of libido. Freud's only reference to grief's

¹³⁶Glenn W. Davidson, Living with Dying (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975).

¹³⁷Switzer.

origins as in the infant's separation anxiety is made in the concluding pages of Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety,¹³⁸ a relatively late work in his life. There, seeking to account for the painfulness of loss, Freud suggests that anxiety is the child's response to a temporary absence of the mother-figure, and mourning is the child's reaction to a permanent loss. Since in the earliest months of life a child cannot distinguish between temporary and permanent absences, all separations are experienced as permanent, and thence, painful. Consistent with his understanding of anxiety as alarm, Freud also notes that anxiety is a child's response to the danger of being without mother; whereas painful mourning is the response to the actual loss.¹³⁹

Otto Rank, one of Freud's earliest followers, focused exclusively on the infant's separation anxiety. Rank posited, however, that the origin of this anxiety lies not in the fear of abandonment or starvation, but in the birth event itself.¹⁴⁰ The birth event is the primal and original separation experience. Furthermore, he argued that all of life is characterized by a continual series of such separation experiences, each one linked back to the primal anxiety. At the point of each separation event, there is a "pull back to the womb" and a "push toward self-dependence."¹⁴¹ Neurosis, according to Rank, was the

¹³⁸Sigmund Freud, "Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety," in The Standard Edition . . . , XX, 171-72.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 172.

¹⁴⁰See Otto Rank, The Trauma of Birth (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1929).

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 24.

result of a fixation of this process. Therapy, therefore, involved an inevitable reliving of the birth trauma (or in our terms a "re-grieving"), freeing up the will to renew its drive toward self dependence.¹⁴²

Melanie Klein is probably the psychoanalytic writer who came closest to identifying separation anxiety with grief. She saw adult mourning as a reactivation of the primal separation anxiety. This basic separation anxiety of the infant, she called "infantile mourning."¹⁴² She described this anxiety as a fear of "losing his loved objects" and characterized it as a "depressive position."¹⁴⁴ Her theory focuses a great deal of attention upon orality, breast-feeding and weaning, which she saw as critical events in the emotional growth of the individual. Because of these earliest connections with orality and breast-feeding, adult mourning is inevitably infused with infantile residues of guilt and paranoid anxiety.¹⁴⁵

Melanie Klein suggested that the process of mourning is a process of incorporating one's parents into one's inner psyche, as they are progressively "lost" in the outer world's process of growing out of childhood. Through successful mourning experiences, a growing child develops inner "good objects" or through unhealthy mourning experiences,

¹⁴²See Rank, Will Therapy.

¹⁴³Melanie Klein, "Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States," International Journal of Psychoanalysis, XXI (1940), 126.

¹⁴⁴Most of these early psychoanalytic writers--Freud, Rank, Klein included--approach the study of grief from the standpoint of pathological grief and depression and not from the standpoint of normal-healthy grief.

¹⁴⁵See John Bowlby's critique of Klein at this point in his "Process of Mourning," p. 276ff.

a set of inner "bad objects." Later in adult life, the total culmination of one's inner "objects" will determine how that individual will handle traumatic losses. Although the immediate reaction to traumatic loss is always anxiety and inner disorganization, the healthy ego is capable of calling upon its storehouse of "good objects" for strength and comfort. Therefore, she writes, "Every advance in the process of mourning results in a deepening in the individual's relationship to his inner objects, in the happiness of regaining them after they were felt to be lost."¹⁴⁶

The most articulate presentation of grief as separation anxiety is given by Switzer, who strengthens the psychoanalytic traditions with the work of Harry Stack Sullivan and numerous theological insights. Building upon Sullivan's interpersonal theory of psychology and some fascinating work on the function and purpose of language formation, Switzer argues for the essential interpersonal character of the self. He writes:

The foundation of the self is comprised of the internalized responses of the significant other. The individual self is interpersonal at its core, arising out of and continuing to be dependent upon the other.¹⁴⁷

Switzer reviews much of the Freudian material on anxiety and grief. He notes that acute grief is remarkably similar to a classic anxiety attack, as documented by psychoanalytic writers, complete with defense mechanisms. This helps lead him to the conclusion that grief is a form of anxiety, namely, separation anxiety. He writes:

¹⁴⁶Klein, p. 144.

¹⁴⁷Switzer, p. 83.

. . . the conclusion seems inescapable that at the very center of grief is separation anxiety. Grief is one among many of a lifetime of separation experiences, each stimulating reactions of anxiety, differing in intensity because of factors, yet all being of basically the same order.¹⁴⁸

Toward the end of his book, Switzer clearly wants to reject the notion that grief is a "single emotion distinguishable from others."¹⁴⁹ Yet the main thesis of his argument is that grief is exactly that--a clearly identifiable emotion best described as separation anxiety. This unique and penetrating insight into grief is blurred still further by his treatment of the other emotions that usually accompany grief--hostility, guilt, depression and meaninglessness. He attempts to define these accompanying emotions in terms of anxiety, and eventually in terms of separation anxiety. For example, guilt, which finds its roots in the negative side of the ambivalence present in all human relationships, is called "guilt-anxiety."¹⁵⁰ And, the crisis of meaning that often accompanies traumatic losses is defined as "existential anxiety."¹⁵¹ In the opinion of this author, such an attempt to define everything as a form of anxiety blurs the real, unique and significant contribution of this work: understanding grief as separation anxiety.

The centrality and importance of separation anxiety in grief is now almost universally accepted by scholars and writers. Listen how Lily Pincus in her new book on grief and the family describes it:

. . . the loss of a loved one reactivates everybody's most painful nightmares, the most primary infantile fears and panic, the anguish of abandonment and the terror of being left alone, having lost

¹⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 105-6.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 179.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 118ff.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 145ff.

love. . . . The baby experiences the loss of his mother as a threat to his existence, and it is this primordial fear that is reactivated in the loss of the closest person. Every significant death may bring in some sense of repetition of this anxiety.¹⁵²

Even those scholars who have proposed new theoretical models of grief have done so, building upon the central premise and experimental data of grief as separation anxiety. Parkes who prefers other terms and models, nevertheless writes: "I think it fair to say that the pining or yearning that constitutes separation anxiety is the characteristic feature of the pang of grief."¹⁵³ Bowlby, who has also rejected the psychoanalytic model in favor of a biological one, began his research with experimental studies of separation anxiety in infants, and actually strengthened the interrelationship between grief and separation anxiety by his studies of grief in non-human animals. He argues that separation anxiety in the human infant is the "prototype" of all adult grief. He writes: that "when the records of the responses to loss objects by adults and young children are placed side by side . . . the essential similarity of this response will be clearly recognized."¹⁵⁴ For the adult he believes that "separation anxiety, grief and mourning are all phases in the same process."¹⁵⁵ Separation anxiety is unquestionably the irreducible element in grief. The grief of the adult finds its origins in the anxiety of the infant.

Nevertheless, this approach to grief as separation anxiety still has some inadequacies. First, this model tends to define grief

¹⁵²Pincus, p. 42.

¹⁵³Parkes, Bereavement, p. 6.

¹⁵⁴Bowlby, Attachment, p. 16.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 9.

in terms of its origins in childhood and fails to appreciate the unique ways that adult grief is different from infantile mourning. Correspondingly, it fails to explain the purpose of grief in the human psyche. How is grief biologically and emotionally helpful to the human species? Second, this approach to grief tends to define grief in terms of a state rather than in terms of a process. Third, by defining grief in terms of anxiety, grief takes on an anticipatory flavor. Anxiety has a future orientation, alarming and arming the human psyche toward something that it fears is yet to happen. This model fails to appreciate the strong past orientation of grief. Grief is primarily an emotional process that seeks to make peace with the past. Fourth, this model of grief has a strong people-orientation, which is most relevant to the grief involved in the actual physical or emotional loss of loved ones. This model is less able to explain adequately the grief involved in the loss of possessions, or the loss of an idea, a dream or similar abstraction.¹⁵⁶ Fifth, defining grief as separation anxiety does not theoretically account for why some separation experiences are griefless. People have countless hundreds of separation experiences each year that are not experienced as anxious events. Why is it that the same separation event for one person causes traumatic anxiety, while the same event for another person causes little or no anxiety. Obviously, there must be some additional theoretical factors necessary to complete a full understanding of grief.

¹⁵⁶For example, consider the grief associated with the death of Martin Luther King (the loss of a "dream") or the concluding scenes from "Camelot" (the loss of an ideal) or the loss of an election or athletic contest (the loss of a goal, or pride).

G. GRIEF AS A FUNCTION OF ATTACHMENT INSTINCTS

The third major theoretical model for understanding grief is to conceive of grief as a function of attachment instincts. This view of grief began with Freud, but has been revised and augmented into a biological model by Bowlby and Parkes.¹⁵⁷ Within this model grief is understood as a process of emotional detachment from any object, person or idea to which one was emotionally attached. Such a view assumes the existence of a basic emotional energy which is attached to or invested in significant others, things or ideas. Further, it assumes that this need or drive to invest emotionally is innate in human nature. Upon the loss of a significant object of attachment, an individual must go through a process of emotionally de-taching oneself (i.e. grief) in order that that energy can then be reinvested in new objects.

As psychological processes in their own right the normal grief process was never at the center of Freud's interest. Nevertheless, his description of the process of mourning remains consistent throughout his work. Freud understood mourning in terms of his concept of libido--psycho-sexual energy. He writes:

Reality-testing has shown that the loved object no longer exists, and it [ego] proceeds to demand that all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object. This demand arouses understandable opposition. . . . This opposition can be so intense that

¹⁵⁷This author recognizes that the term "instinct" is a difficult and "loaded" term. This author uses the term not with a medical-psychoanalytic model in mind, but with a biological-evolutionary model (Bowlby) in mind. By the term this author means that human beings have an innate drive or need built into human nature. This generalized need is universal in all humans, but highly subject to individual and cultural conditions to govern its expression.

a turning away from reality takes place . . . but normally, respect for reality gains the day.¹⁵⁸

This conflict between the demands of reality and the desire of the libido to remain attached to the loved object creates great psychic conflict and pain. The process of gradually withdrawing libido is therefore "piecemeal" and "extraordinarily painful."¹⁵⁹ But finally, he suggests, there is "a withdrawal of the libido from this object and a displacement of it on to a new one."¹⁶⁰ Therefore grief's purpose in the economics of the psyche seems clear. Grief's task is to adjust the psyche to reality by withdrawing the libido, thus freeing it for new attachments.

The bereaved have long comforted one another with the advice that "where grief is, love was." While a simplification, there is some truth to this adage that this model of grief as a function of attachment highlights. Alexander Bain, an early British psychologist once put it this way: Sorrow is in proportion "to the power to the attachment."¹⁶¹ The redefining of love as attachment clarifies this dynamic. Allan Fromme argues that "love" is too varied and ambiguous a term to serve scientific purposes. The broader category that must be discussed is "attachment." He writes:

Love is that attachment but also any and all other attachments as well, whether they be to things or people pleasant or unpleasant, new or old, conscious or unconscious. . . . These attachments need

¹⁵⁸Freud, The Standard Edition, XIV, 258.

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., XX, 172.

¹⁶¹Alexander Bain, The Emotions and the Will (London: Longmans, Green, 1875), p. 146.

not even be to people. We become attached to an idea, an object--a possession, a place, a fantasy, an ideal--to anything at all.¹⁶²

Grief is thus possible in response to the loss/separation from any object to which one was attached. There is now theoretical room for explaining the grief that follows the loss of an ideal, an era or even a "time of life." There is also theoretical room for explaining why persons with unhappy relationships to a lost person will often grieve just as intensely as those who had happy relationships. Grief is related to attachment, not love. Attachment feelings can be, and usually are, ambivalent.

Surprisingly, understanding grief as a function of attachment has received some insightful attention in the pastoral care community. Edgar Jackson, building upon Freud's view of grief, describes grief as a "reclaiming of emotional capital."¹⁶³ He writes that grief is that emotion "whereby a person seeks to disengage himself from the demanding relationship that existed and to reinvest his emotional capital in new and productive directions for the health and welfare of his future and society."¹⁶⁴ The emphasis here is on the necessity of grief. Unless the "grief work" is completed, a person's emotional life remains trapped by the past, and he/she is unable to invest him/herself in anything or anyone.

¹⁶²Allan Fromme, The Ability to Love (No. Hollywood, CA: Wilshire, 1976), p. 20.

¹⁶³Edgar D. Jackson, When Someone Dies (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 6.

¹⁶⁴Jackson, Understanding Grief, p. 18.

William Rogers, an early writer in the pastoral care movement, takes this view of grief as well.¹⁶⁵ He says people build "emotional constellations" with their environment and other people. "People and objects become extensions of ourselves. Feeling tone develops around these persons and objects according to their importance in the individual's attempt to meet his emotional needs."¹⁶⁶ He then makes a keen insight: "The important point to remember, however, is that grief is not the result of what happens to the loved one. It is rather the result of what happens to the bereaved."¹⁶⁷ Grief is caused not by the death or loss of a loved one, but by the valuing process of the griever. Grief exists because the griever valued and gave meaning to that which is now lost. In short, grief is a function of attachment. This crucial insight now makes theoretical room for the explanation of why two people who suffer the same objective loss subjectively experience different dynamics. The griever who had an intense reaction grieves because he/she attached greater emotional energy or value to the loss object. A different person, for example in a marital relationship, might have given very little of him/herself emotionally. Thus upon a divorce, this person grieves very little.¹⁶⁸ The opposite of attachment appears to be indifference, lack of investment or value (and not hate or

¹⁶⁵William Rogers, "The Pastor's Work with Grief," Pastoral Psychology, XIX (September 1963), 19-26.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 19-30.

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸The degree of attachment is of course not the only detriment of grief's intensity. The type of loss, its timing, and the griever's personality structure will also influence the intensity of grief. For additional information see chapter nine of Parkes, Bereavement, p. 118ff.

anger).¹⁶⁹ Whenever a person emotionally attaches, invests or otherwise values, he/she also by definition is making him/herself vulnerable for grief. Arthur C. Carr writes: "The [same] capacity that makes one capable of warm, satisfying relationships also leaves one vulnerable to sadness, despair and grief when such relationships are disrupted."¹⁷⁰

Bowlby has also understood grief in terms of attachment, and augmented this understanding with a strong biological model.¹⁷¹ Bowlby began his work by studying separation anxiety in human infants, when faced with the temporary absences from their mother-figure. He was able to isolate the primal grief process as a sequence of protest, despair and detachment. He characterized the initial reactions to separation as "searching behavior."¹⁷² But he was fascinated to note that after extended absences, an infant responded to the return of the mother-figure, not with rejoicing but with detachment.¹⁷³ With all of this behavior--protest, searching, detachment--he asked the question: What is the purpose of this behavior? He sought help in answering this question from the world of animals.

In reviewing the studies of grief and separation anxiety in animals, Bowlby noticed the same characteristic behaviors that marked

¹⁶⁹See Rollo May, Love and Will (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 27ff.

¹⁷⁰Arthur C. Carr, "Bereavement as Relative Experience," in Schoenberg, Bereavement, p. 3.

¹⁷¹Bowlby, Attachment.

¹⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁷³He was unsure whether this detachment was disguised punishment or whether the infant had actually completed the emotional detaching process.

his studies of human infants. For example, Lorenz's work with geese documents that upon the death of a mate a goose exhibits behavior that Lorenz believed "certainly corresponds to grief."¹⁷⁴ "Behavior designed to recover the lost object," writes Bowlby, "followed by or coupled with withdrawal, apathy, and a rejection of potential new objects is the rule."¹⁷⁵ Separation anxiety in young primates is even more remarkably similar to young humans. In various studies of young rhesus monkeys when separated from their mothers, Hinde and Spencer-Booth have documented the extensive, traumatic behavior of both infant and mother, including protest, searching and eventually despair.¹⁷⁶ Separation anxiety in animals alarms the animal of danger, initiating one of three types of behavior: immobility, movement away from danger, or movement toward attachment figure. Separation anxiety or attachment behavior is instinctoid in animals, securing their evolutionary survival. Bowlby concludes:

. . . the function of attachment behavior, which of course promotes proximity to special companions, is protection from predators, and that this is as true for humans as it is for other species of mammal and bird. For all ground-living primates, safety lies in being with the band. To become separated from it is to provide a more or less

¹⁷⁴See K. Lorenz, King Solomon's Ring (London: Methuen, 1952).

¹⁷⁵Bowlby, "Process of Mourning," p. 294.

¹⁷⁶See R. A. Hinde and Y. Spencer-Booth, "Effects of Grief Separation from Mother on Rhesus Monkeys," Science, CLXXIII (1971), 111-18. Or R. A. Hinde, Y. Spencer-Booth, and M. Bruce, "Effects of Six-day Maternal Deprivation on Rhesus Monkey Infants," Nature, CCX (1966), 1021-23. Conversely, the importance of attachment instincts have been documented by Harlow and associates. See H. F. Harlow, "The Development of Affectional Patterns in Infant Monkeys," in B. M. Foss (ed.) Detriments of Infant Behavior (New York: Wiley, 1961), I. Or H. F. Harlow and R. R. Zimmermann, "Affectional Responses in Infant Monkeys," Science, CXXX (1959), 421.

easy meal for a lurking leopard or a pack of hunting dogs. For weaker members, especially females and young, the old and the sick, isolation often spells speedy death.¹⁷⁷

Separation anxiety and attachment impulse is a part of the evolutionary-instinctual heritage of the human species. It enables humanity to survive evolutionally because the anxiety-signal mobilized the young infant to seek the safety of its attachment figures.¹⁷⁸ Thus today's modern infant, and theoretically the adult man or woman as well, have a set of instinct impulses related to attachment and separation, imbedded in our psyches from the past collective experiences of the human race. As such, this "separation anxiety" is the "prototype" for all adult grief.

In turning his attention to adult grief and mourning, Bowlby understands separation anxiety, grief and mourning as a part of a continuous process.¹⁷⁹ Separation anxiety and protest are more characteristic of the initial stages of grief and the reactions of infants, both of which assume only a temporary absence. But after a prolonged absence or in an absence that is deemed permanent from the start, the slow painful process of emotional detachment begins its work. Here too, grief's purpose or task is the promotion, or better said, the restoration of attachment. Only when grief does its work, and successfully frees the griever's emotional energy from the loss object, can that

¹⁷⁷Bowlby, Attachment, p. 93.

¹⁷⁸In an interesting study of the stimuli that initiates human infant separation anxiety, the following stimuli were isolated: being left alone, sudden displacement or loss of support, darkness, strange person, high board, sudden and loud sounds, snake, large dogs, and unfamiliar environment. This study is described in detail in Bowlby, Attachment, p. 96ff.

¹⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 9.

person reinvest him/herself in new objects of attachment. Bowlby writes:

Just as a child playing with Meccano must destroy his construction before he can use the pieces again . . . so must the individual each time he is bereaved or relinquishes a major goal accept the destruction of a part of his personality before he can organize it afresh towards a new object or goal. Although unwelcome, such phases are a necessary part of being alive.¹⁸⁰

Grief in this sense is necessary for health, both the health of the individual and of the social unit. One can easily see that as such the grief process serves an evolutionary advantage. The bereaved who are emotionally unable to detach themselves from the lost loved one would inevitably perish through isolation, starvation or destruction. The survival of the mourner depended upon the successful emotional detachment from the loss loved one, and the formation of new bonds of attachment with other humans. Grief's purpose or telos is attachment.¹⁸¹ It serves this purpose by emotionally detaching the mourner from the loss loved one thus freeing that energy for new attachments.

According to Bowlby, grief serves its purpose in yet a still more subtle way. Here, Bowlby received help from the work of zoologist, Charles Darwin. In a late work,¹⁸² Darwin closely analyzes the components of grief and weeping in humans and animals. He posits that the purpose of crying is to engage the sympathy and assistance of other members of the species. A. F. Shand, an early psychologist, articulated

¹⁸⁰Bowlby, "Process of Mourning," p. 312.

¹⁸¹Or if one wishes, love. Attachment is a broader category, embracing many kinds of love relationships. It would not be inaccurate to say that grief's purpose is love.

¹⁸²Charles Darwin, The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals (London: Murray, 1872).

this point more precisely:

Thus the expressions and gestures of sorrow--the glance of the eyes indicating the direction of expectation, its watchings and waiting, as well as its pathetic cries--all are evidence that the essential end of its system is to obtain the strength and help of others to remedy its own weakness.¹⁸³

Grief then serves to promote attachment not only by its end-product--detaching a person's emotional energy from the loss object--but by the very act of weeping itself. Weeping calls forth the sympathy and assistance of others, thus creating and strengthening new bonds of attachment in the very process of grieving over the lost bonds. Ethel Tobach writes:

The expression of grief presents a strong attractive stimulus to other individuals. Eliciting such approaches may lead to the formation of new bonds. . . . The optimal development of the process of grief leads to the formation of new social bonds.¹⁸⁴

In one sense then grief is by definition and intention a social activity. Here too one can easily see that these expressions of grief, like weeping, would be an evolutionary advantage, bringing humans to the aid of weaker members and promoting the social bonds of safety. A. F. Shand continues: "The cry of sorrow . . . tends to preserve the life of the young (and weak) by bringing those who watch over them to their assistance."¹⁸⁵ The impulse to cry when in need, for whatever reason, and the impulse to respond to weeping with assistance, is a part of the

¹⁸³A. F. Shand, The Foundations of Character (London: Macmillan, 1920), p. 315.

¹⁸⁴Ethel Tobach, "Notes on the Comparative Psychology of Grief," in Schoenberg, Loss and Grief, p. 352.

¹⁸⁵Shand, p. 29.

instinctual heritage of human beings, imbedded deeply on their collective unconsciousnesses by eons of evolutionary development.¹⁸⁶

Colin Parkes, a modern British scholar also has been influenced deeply by the early work of Charles Darwin and the evolutionary functions of grief and attachment. Parkes, who in contrast to Bowlby has worked almost exclusively with adult grief and mourning, also understands separation anxiety in terms of alarm.¹⁸⁷ Anxiety's function is to alert the subject to a dangerous situation, and mobilize its energies in either a "flight or fight" response. Parkes writes:

. . . bereavement evokes arousal and the responses that characterize the alarm reaction; it may also evoke approach or avoidance behavior; and the form these responses tend to take will be partly stressor-specific . . . and partly subject-specific.¹⁸⁸

The most characteristic feature of the alarm of grief is "searching."¹⁸⁹ Parkes documents countless examples, from common restlessness to spiritualism as expressions of this impulse to search for the loss object or person. Like Bowlby, Parkes understands that the origins of this impulse lie deep within the evolutionary heritage of the human race when isolation from loved ones meant certain death.

Parkes is also especially helpful in understanding the reality-oriented nature of the grief process. "Grief," he writes, "is a process of realization, of 'making real' the fact of loss."¹⁹⁰ Especially in

¹⁸⁶The thesis posited in this paragraph is that weeping is an expression of weakness. This understanding of crying accounts for the wide variety of events that initiate weeping. If weeping is a function of weakness, an implication would be that the person who cannot cry, perhaps cannot do so because he/she cannot allow weakness in themselves.

¹⁸⁷See Chapter three of Parkes, Bereavement.

¹⁸⁸Ibid, p. 37-38.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., chapter 4.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., p. 156.

the cases of traumatic loss, the psyche cannot emotionally accept the full reality of the loss all at once. Periods of pain must be regularly spelled by period of fantasy, repression or denial when the lost object is still imagined to be present. Gradually the defenses become less necessary, as each aspect of the loss is progressively made real until the psyche has accepted the full reality of its loss. Parkes writes:

Grief work is the process of learning by which each change resulting from the bereavement is progressively realized (made real) and a fresh set of assumptions about the world is established.¹⁹¹

In this sense then, grief is reality oriented. Its end-product or goal is the adjustment of the person's psyche to reality. In so doing, Parkes points out¹⁹² grief can be considered health oriented as well.

Parkes is also helpful in describing attachment-grief dynamics in terms of identity and identity formation. He argues that every grief experience is simultaneously a process in changing one's identity as well.¹⁹³ Identity is built upon those "objects" with which one identifies or in which one invests emotional energy. Such "objects," as roles, loved persons, possessions, bodily characteristics, etc., become "extensions of our self." When one such object is lost, one's identity is thrown into confusion. Through a painful process of identity reformation, however, one can come to establish a new identity without the former object. Again, clearly, it is not the loss per se but the relative importance of the lost object to the person's identity that determines the intensity of grief. Courtney Peterson describes

¹⁹¹Ibid., p. 138.

¹⁹²Ibid.

¹⁹³Ibid., see chapter seven, "Gaining a New Identity."

this dynamic in terms of concentric circles.¹⁹⁴ In the innermost circle or bull's eye are those objects that are central to one's identity, with each progressively larger circle holding those objects which are progressively less central. Such a configuration would be a "map" of one's identity and also a statement of the potentially most traumatic losses.¹⁹⁵ By describing attachment-grief dynamics in terms of identity, Parkes and others have built theoretical bridges to the work of life cycle theorists, like Erik Erikson who understands the life cycle as a continual series of identity formations and reformations.¹⁹⁶

This theoretical model understands grief in terms of attachment behavior. It conceives of the grief process as a gradual painful withdrawal of emotional investment from a loved object or person. The completion of this process is necessary before that emotional energy can be reinvested in new objects or persons. Thus, this model clearly shows how intimately grief and attachment (or love) are related. Attachments make one vulnerable for loss, but the grief process restores the person's capacity to "love" again. This model also indicates how grief is a function of the griever's valuing process, and not just of the loss per se. A person can grieve the loss of anything of value, to which he/she assigned meaning. Thus, the close connection between

¹⁹⁴In a private conversation with this author on July 12, 1976. Courtney Peterson is Director of Greenleaves Associates, a counseling agency in Claremont, CA and Protestant Chaplain at Pacific State Hospital, Pomona, CA.

¹⁹⁵Such a map would be a helpful diagnostic tool for helping professionals in evaluating the severity of a person's grief reaction.

¹⁹⁶See Erik Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis (New York: Norton, 1968).

grief and meaning is affirmed. These considerations lead this author to the conclusion that this theoretical model of grief offers the best explanation all of the dynamics regarding grief. The two earlier models however also make unique contributions to a full understanding of grief. All three models must be understood together.

H. DETRIMENTS OF HEALTH

The interrelationship of grief and growth is a complex one but it is one that is at the very heart of the helping-grieving process. Several scholars in the area of grief have isolated sets of variables that influence the length, severity, type and eventual outcome of grief reactions. These variables include factors antecedent to the loss (childhood loss experiences); factors concurrent to the loss (mode of loss, type of loss); and factors subsequent to the loss (resources available to the bereaved, secondary stress factors, etc.)¹⁹⁷ The focus of this dissertation is on the last category, the subsequent factors. Once a loss has occurred and the grief reaction has begun, what are the factors that facilitate the grief process and thereby the individual's health?

Research scholarship over the past thirty years has supported the conclusion that the single most important factor is the individual's free and full expression of his/her grief feelings. "Successful management," writes researchers Caroff and Dobrof, "appears to be associated initially with the ability . . . to experience emotionally the

¹⁹⁷Parkes, Bereavement, p. 121.

reality of the loss and to find some means of expressing the feelings engendered."¹⁹⁸ In contrast, the more one denies, avoids, delays or represses his/her grief, the more blocked, drawn-out and eventually painful the grief work will be. This conclusion dates back to the work of Helene Deutsch who argued that grief, by its very nature, strove toward expression.¹⁹⁹ If not allowed to be expressed in typical overt ways, grief would nevertheless seek covert expressions as physical ailments, depression, nervousness and insomnia. Funeral director, Roy Nichols puts it pointedly:

Emotions will be expressed either as an open healing wound, or a closed festering wound, either honestly or dishonestly, either appropriately or inappropriately, but emotions will be expressed, and the grief work will be done.²⁰⁰

The classic works of Lindemann²⁰¹ and Kübler-Ross²⁰² have also supported this conclusion. The latter author especially has emphasized the dangers of permanent or chronic denial.²⁰³ Grief cannot begin until the death-loss is fully emotionally realized. Permanent or chronic denial of the reality of death only inhibits that process and thereby blocks growth.²⁰⁴ There are many willing or unwilling assessories to

¹⁹⁸Phyllis Caroff and Rose Dobrof, "The Helping Process with Bereaved Families," in Schoenberg, Bereavement, p. 239.

¹⁹⁹Deutsch, p. 13.

²⁰⁰Roy Nichols and Jane Nichols, "Funerals: A Time for Grief and Growth," in Kübler-Ross, Death: the Final State of Growth, p. 93.

²⁰¹Lindemann.

²⁰²Kübler-Ross, On Death and Dying.

²⁰³Temporary denial on the other hand, is a normal part of the grief process, at times a necessary "spell" from the pain.

²⁰⁴For a detailed discussion of the degrees and kind of denial see Avery Weisman, On Dying and Denying (New York: Behavioral, 1972).

this atmosphere of denial. Modern American culture and civilization goes to great lengths to deny the reality of death and pain. Specifically, the funeral industry has received bitter attacks in recent years for its tendency to cover-up the reality of death in the name of "protecting our loved ones."²⁰⁵ The medical professions have also received criticism for the common practice of immediately administering sedatives or tranquilizers to the bereaved upon first receiving the news of the death of a loved one. Switzer writes:

. . . the indiscriminate use of sedatives, tranquilizers and other drugs as a matter of routine medical practice in every situation of grief may unnecessarily mask the pain of anxiety, therefore preventing the beginning of necessary first steps in the healing process: the clear realization of the reality of death, the feeling of the pain, the weeping, the immediate talking about the deceased and the relationship.²⁰⁶

The assumption that by protecting a person from pain we are doing him/her a service is false, and may even be to the contrary. Kübler-Ross proposes that instead of sedatives, hospitals provide a "screaming room," where the bereaved could go immediately upon hearing the news of their loss to give free license to their natural emotions.²⁰⁷ Such a procedure is based upon a different assumption: that by facing one's pain and giving expression to one's grief, the grief process is facilitated and growth maximized.

Facing one's grief and the pain therein is not always an easy

²⁰⁵For example, see Jessica Mitford, The American Way of Death (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963).

²⁰⁶Switzer, p. 191.

²⁰⁷Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, Questions and Answers (New York: Macmillan, 1974), p. 22.

task. Most humans initially recoil from pain especially the severe pain of a sudden and tragic loss of a loved one. Grief, however, is one of those situations in which "the only way out is through," but going through often takes great courage and faith. Roy and Jane Nichols, funeral directors, believe that in grief "our choice is only to permit pain to be experienced fast and hard or to be experienced slow and hard; that's our only choice."²⁰⁸ They tell the story of the young parents of a one year old mongoloid child, Keith, who after painfully adjusting to their son's condition and learning to love him, suddenly lose him to a "swift invasion of pneumonia." They chose to take their grief "hard and fast," because with a second baby on the way, they had about six weeks to resolve their grief and get ready to love a new child. The key was active participation in the funeral process. They spent hours with Keith's body prior to the funeral, held the casket during the service, and carried "little Keith" to the gravesite. The story continues:

Rob and Sue on their knees at the grave slowly, spontaneously, without prior intent, placed Keith's body and casket into the grave, and carefully began to pull dirt into the grave. The astute minister said only, 'I think the kids need some help.' Forty friends passed along the dirt, handful by handful, with no shovels, until the grave was filled.²⁰⁹

These young parents chose to thrust themselves totally into their pain and grief. By doing so they accelerated their grief work and maximized their growth.

The interrelationship of grief and growth is more complex than the important but simple conclusion that the more one expresses his/her

²⁰⁸Nichols, p. 94.

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 95.

grief emotions, the more the grief process is facilitated and growth maximized. Questions remain concerning the precise variables that enable people fully to express their grief emotions. This dissertation proposes to examine four such variables: 1. community, 2. rituals, 3. meaning-system, 4. faith. Following is a review of research literature on these variables within the context of this chapter's discussion of the nature and dynamics of grief and primary focus on accidental losses.

A Supportive Community

Most people exist within a social community prior to any loss or death. Yet when a severe loss occurs, the character of that person's network of community becomes a key factor in the ease and outcome of his/her grief process. Several research studies have confirmed this conclusion. David Maddison and Beverley Raphael have studied conjugal bereavement by interviewing widowed people at various stages after their loss.²¹⁰ They classified the various resultant grief processes into "good outcomes" (indicating resolution) and "bad outcomes" (indicating unresolved grief and deteriorating health). They found that among the bereaved's social network, the availability of other people and their willingness to listen were key factors in distinguishing between the two outcomes. They write:

More specifically, widows who subsequently proceeded to a bad outcome tended to express the feeling that there were some people

²¹⁰David Maddison and Beverley Raphael, "Conjugal Bereavement and the Social Network," in Schoenberg, Bereavement, pp. 26-40.

in the environment who had overtly or covertly opposed the free expression of effects, particularly those of grief and anger.²¹¹

A similar conclusion, also reflecting the close connection between social support and the free expression of grief feelings, was reached by the study of John J. Schwab, et al.²¹² They also interviewed widowed people one year after their loss and classified their current grief reactions roughly into resolved and unresolved categories. They too reported that human relationships, especially those that accepted the free expression of feelings, were critical to growth. They write:

The apparent lack of social supports we observed seems to be contributory. Furthermore, many respondents reported that their friends and relatives showed concern and willingness to talk about the loss for only a few weeks. Thus it seems that many did not have an opportunity to express their sorrow or ventilate their feelings over a period of time.²¹³

His conclusion can be confirmed by another body of research literature from the fields of community psychiatry and social psychology, which support the broader realization that a close-knit supportive community functions as a mental health preventive. Blackman and Goldstein have demonstrated that in close-knit communities which they define as "credit networks" individuals who have fewer available supports manifest more psychological symptomatology in crisis periods.²¹⁴ They write:

²¹¹Ibid., p. 29.

²¹²John J. Schwab, et al., "Studies in Grief: A Preliminary Report," in Schoenberg, Bereavement, pp. 78-90.

²¹³Ibid., p. 87.

²¹⁴S. Blackman and K. M. Goldstein, "Some Aspects of a Theory of Community Health," Community Mental Health Journal, IV, 1 (1968), 85ff.

Failure to be involved in such a network of credit . . . increases the probability that disability will result from a given amount of stress because no support will be available.²¹⁵

This conclusion has been confirmed and further elaborated upon by Weiss and Bergen.²¹⁶ It seems clear that a small supportive community, that freely exchanges emotional "credits," provides one element of protection against mental illness, no matter what kind of stresses the individual must endure. When crises do occur the availability of a supportive community becomes a crucial factor in contributing to the positive resolution of those crisis periods.

The bereaved have needed more than the mere presence of other people. They also need an attitude of empathy that invites the free expression of one's feelings in an atmosphere of understanding. A careful distinction, however, must be made between empathy and sympathy, the latter of which is the response usually associated with death and loss, but not the one that is most helpful. Family therapist, Norman Paul who believes that unresolved grief is at the root of most family pathologies defines sympathy as when:

. . . the subject is principally absorbed in his own feelings as projected into the object's special, separate experience The subject is likely to use his own feelings as standards against which to measure the object's feelings and behavior. Sympathy then by passes real understanding of the other person.²¹⁷

In the terms of Transactional Analysis, sympathy is primarily a Parent-

²¹⁵Ibid., p. 85.

²¹⁶R. J. Weiss and B. J. Bergen, "Social Supports and the Reduction of Psychiatric Disability," Psychiatry, XXXI (1968) 107ff.

²¹⁷Norman Paul, "Psychiatry: Its Role in the Resolution of Grief," in Kutscher, p. 187.

Child transaction, in which the sympathizer essentially feels "poor you." Empathy in contrast is a suffering with the other person, primarily a Child-Child transaction. The empathizer so shares the other person's feelings that he/she "relives" those same experiences in him/herself. Most widowed people want (and need) genuine empathy and are quick to detect the hollow tones of sympathy in such cliches as, "Time heals all wounds," "Keep your chin up," "God works in mysterious ways," etc. This author believes that this distinction between sympathy and empathy accounts for the phenomenal success of such self-help organizations for the widowed as Parents Without Partners, To Live Again, THEO, and Post-Cana.²¹⁸ These organizations provide community in an otherwise fractured world, but more importantly their self-help philosophy promotes empathy, not sympathy. The emphasis in these organizations is upon giving and receiving help from "people who have been there." In order for community to be helpful to the bereaved, it must be a community characterized by empathy.

Knowing that empathetic community is helpful to the grieving individual is important, but it does not indicate exactly why or how this occurs. At first this seems obvious. Empathetic community provides a context in which the grieving individual can talk. Anyone who has consistently been with the recently widowed knows of their incessant need to talk about their loss, to "tell their story." Talking is one

²¹⁸Locations:

Parents Without Partners, 80 5th Ave., New York City, NY
 T.L.A. Box 103, West Chester, PA 19380
 THEO, Inc., 11609 Frankstown Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15235
 Post-Cana, 1721 Rhode Island Ave. NW, Washington D.C. 20006

way (among many) to give expression to grief emotions. This action facilitates the grieving-healing process. Switzer summarizes this connection:

The transformation of inner life necessary for healing comes about with the process of exploring verbally every aspect of the relationship with the deceased as concretely and fully as possible until the person can accept each one without the intense inner longing. The primary emotional support which makes this possible is the establishment of emotional rapport with other persons.²¹⁹

The connection between grief and the need for emotional support from other people is probably deeper than just the need "to talk it over." If what Switzer and others have suggested is true that the primary characteristic of grief is "separation anxiety" then it stands to reason that the opposite--a close empathetic relationship with another person--would be a primary element in grief's healing. Earlier in the discussion of the interrelationship of grief and attachment instincts, it was noted that the very expressions of grief--weeping, wailing, self-punishing behavior, etc.--serve as instinctual stimuli to other humans to come to the aid of the bereaved and otherwise weak. Humans seem to be instinctually programmed not only to cry when feeling weak, but to respond with comfort to those who do cry. Such an instinct, however distorted by modern culture, is still basic to the healing of grief. By its very nature then, the process of grieving (in this case expressed as talking) promotes social bonds just as empathetic community in turn promotes the free expression of grief. Empathetic community and the expression of grief emotions appear to be mutually reinforcing and deeply interrelated.

²¹⁹Switzer, p. 199.

In general, then, the importance of community, especially empathetic community in facilitating an individual's grief seems supported by some formal research evidence as well as the general informal observations of the bereaved and their organizations.

Rituals

Whenever a loss or separation occurs, however severe or subtle, there are certain culturally ascribed rituals that the affected individuals participate in. These rituals are the community's way of publicly recognizing the changes that this loss has brought. Examples of such loss/separation rituals include funeral and mourning rites, weddings, graduation ceremonies, baby showers, going-away parties, house-warming parties, and even the common "waving good-bye." These rituals serve many purposes. They publicly recognize the legal and social changes of status brought by the loss or separation. They enable the affected community to lift-up their commonly held values, beliefs, and myths. They provide occasions that gather a supportive community around the most profoundly affected, thus reinforcing the community-variable. Most importantly, these rituals can also provide structures that facilitate the participants' grief and thereby their health. Audrey Gordon in writing about Jewish mourning practices comments:

The intention of all mourning practices should be the fullest possible outpouring of grief and the opportunity for the family and community to reknit after the loss of one of its members so that they may continue to be able to love and work.²²⁰

²²⁰Audrey Gordon, "The Jewish View of Death: Guidelines for Mourners," in Kübler-Ross, Death: Final Stage, p. 51.

The presence and character of the rituals surrounding loss and separation are key factors in enabling or blocking the participants' full expression of grief emotions.

Anthropological studies of ritual in primitive societies underscores the function of ritual as a facilitator of grief. Mourning rituals, for example, are generally more expressive and demonstrative than those of modern civilization. This vivid and volatile expression of emotion facilitates the grief process of the participants. This free expression of grief is possible in part because ritual provides a structure in which one can grieve. Prescribed mourning rituals usually have a starting point, a set of symbols and myths, clear boundaries and limits, and most importantly, an ending point. With such structures clearly established in the rituals, people can deal with their grief directly and intensely without fear of "going too far." Edgar Jackson compares this to modern societies:

Primitive man faced his grief directly and worked out a system of personal and social rituals and symbols that made it possible for him to deal with it directly. Modern man does not seem to know how to proceed in the expression of this fundamental emotion. He has no generally accepted social pattern for dealing with death. His rituals are partial and unsatisfying²²¹

The triple impact of secularization, urbanization and value pluralism have contributed to a decline of rituals and their use in modern western cultures. For many scholars this increased absence of ritual is related to the increased frequency of emotional difficulty adjusting to severe loss or separation. Geoffrey Gorer, an English

²²¹Jackson, Understanding Grief, p. 57.

anthropologist, believes that the disappearance of rituals in contemporary British and American societies is a serious loss.²²² "Mourning," he writes, "is treated as if it were a weakness, a self-indulgence, a reprehensible bad habit instead of a psychological necessity."²²³ People no longer have a clear ritualistic guidance that enabled them in past centuries to grieve without embarrassment. Parkes, agreeing with Gorer's observation, concludes "that the absence today of social expectations and rituals facilitating mourning is likely to contribute to the occurrence of pathological reactions to bereavement."²²⁴

The ill effects of the absence of ritual²²⁵ is nowhere more startling than it is with children. Modern children, unlike their counterparts in centuries past, are systematically "protected" and shielded from death, the dying and grief. Often modern western children grow up not ever having seen a funeral or grief. In short, they do not know how to grieve. So when faced with a severe loss of a loved one, they are emotionally confused, bewildered and repressed. Norman Paul writes:

It is ironic that the culture which has provided Karen [case study] with a better standard of living, health and education than most of the world's children has simultaneously deprived her of another

²²²Geoffrey Gorer, Death, Grief and Mourning (New York: Doubleday, 1965).

²²³Ibid., p. 85.

²²⁴Parkes, Bereavement, p. 126.

²²⁵Another striking example of the absence of ritual in modern western culture is with marital separation and divorce which is too new a phenomenon in human history to have yet developed well established cultural rituals. Some health professionals who work with the divorced and separated advocate we develop a divorce ritual to enable such people to easier complete grief-separation process.

vital need--the opportunity to complete her grief within a socially acceptable context. In some, more primitive societies, every death is an occasion involving the entire community including the smallest children. All participate in rituals and ceremonies that mark the passage from life to death. . . .²²⁶

In a sense rituals serve an educational purpose, teaching each generation how to express their strong emotions in socially acceptable ways. Without such rituals modern humans are emotionally ignorant and inhibited, and therefore prone to greater difficulty in successfully resolving their grief.

More than simply being available, rituals must also accurately reflect the values, meanings, and feelings of the participants if they are to be truly facilitative of grief. Most modern rituals reflect the culture's general distaste of strong emotion. They emphasize order, control, rationality and an "observer mentality." Certain funeral customs and practices contribute to an illusionary portrayal of death which blocks the full emotional acceptance of the loss. Other rituals rooted in ancient religious traditions or ethnic customs are "out of touch" with the language, feelings and styles of their modern participants. In such cases ritual will actually block the free expression of grief, rather than facilitate it.

Vamil D. Volkan has pioneered a method of therapy for people with unresolved grief called "re-grief therapy." In his studies of pathological grief, he confirms the conclusion that "it is characteristic of our patients' experience that the funeral rites did not go well.

²²⁶Paul, p. 183.

²²⁷Vamil D. Volkan, "Re-Grief Therapy," in Schoenberg, Bereavement, pp. 334-50.

Our findings here suggest the importance of this kind of ritual, among others, and the benefits of full participation in it."²²⁸ Volkan's patients did have rituals available to them, but these ritualistic observations failed to facilitate the grief process because they were for one reason or another out of touch with the participants.

In recent years there have been experimental attempts to make rituals more participative and flexible. Paul Irion of Lancaster Theological Seminary has pioneered the writing of a humanistic funeral.²²⁹ Liturgist renewals in many churches emphasize participation and flexibility. Others have experimented with wedding, divorce and separation rituals.

Clearly, rituals are a key variable in enabling the bereaved to give full expression to their grief emotions. More than the mere presence or absence of rituals, however, the deeper variable seems to be the character of these rituals. Rituals that encourage the full emotional participation of their people facilitate grief, whereas rituals that emphasize order and control actually inhibit the bereaved's grief process, and thereby their health.

Meaning-systems

It seems obvious that a person's meaning-system, expressed in beliefs like life-after-death, God's love, the purpose of suffering,

²²⁸Ibid., p. 338.

²²⁹See Paul Irion, The Funeral: Vestige or Value (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966).

and so on, would influence how he/she handles a severe loss or death. In actuality, however, the research literature on grief has generally not dealt with this important subject. The first-hand accounts of grief experiences, classified by this author as "inspirational-religious" literature, have written a great deal about the need for faith and religion in times of crisis, but the imprecision and narrow use of the term "faith" and "religion" make these books valueless to researchers, except as accounts of one person's experience.

Pastoral counselors, however, have attempted to present a reasonable argument for the importance of a person's meaning-system in aiding their adjustment to severe loss or death. Jackson, for example, has argued that the "faith of the grief-stricken person may do much to determine how the incidents of life influence him."²³⁰ By "faith," he means a set of religious values that one both ascribes to and practices in rituals. He proposes that the minimum concepts necessary for a "working faith"--one that eases and facilitates grief--are: 1. a concept of purpose that gives life meaning; 2. a concept of man as a spiritual being; 3. a concept of God as essential goodness; 4. a concept that death is relative; 5. a concept of Jesus as communicating God's love; 6. a concept of historical continuity with past humans; and 7. a concept of soul and its value.²³¹ Such a set of religious values and beliefs could conceivably influence a person's reaction to loss and death, but to date there is little direct empirical research on exactly how that occurs.

²³⁰Jackson, Understanding Grief, p. 112. ²³¹Ibid., pp. 114ff.

Studies of the experiences of prisoners-of-war do provide some hard empirical evidence concerning the role of a person's meaning system in times of crisis. The prisoner-of-war experience, however, is not purely nor exclusively a loss/death experience, although there are significant measures of loss, separation, and death in it. Furthermore, the prisoner-of-war experience is usually perceived as a temporary loss or separation, a conviction that significantly affect the dynamics of grief. Therefore the conclusions of these studies, while worth reporting, are only indirectly applicable to a specific study of grief.

The modern studies of prisoner-of-war experiences began after World War II and focused on the German concentration camp experiences. Many writers²³² have agreed that it was of the greatest importance that a prisoner of war in these camps have some spiritual life, defined broadly as a religious, political or humanistic philosophy of life. The key element appeared not to be the content of the meaning-system, but the degree of commitment and devotion to it. Thus De Wind can write:

It is therefore no mere accident that the convinced Christians as well as the Communists, who would seem to be their psychological opposites, should have shown the greatest power or resistance in camps, and even managed to set up certain forms of anti-Fascist organization.²³³

In her work with the terminally ill, Kübler-Ross makes a similar

²³²Ellie A. Cohen, Human Behavior in the Concentration Camp (New York: Norton, 1953), p. 148. A. J. W. Kaas, Over de psychologie der politieke gevangenen in het concentratie-kamp. De nieuwe stem. I, 6 (1946), 419. P. H. Vrijhof, "Psychologische beschouwingen over concentratiekampen," Tijdschrift voor de psychologie en haar grensgebieden, n.r. III, 1 (1948), 7ff. H. O. Bluhm, "How Did They Survive?" American Journal of Psychotherapy, II, 1 (1948), 20ff.

²³³E. DeWind, "The Confrontation with Death," International Journal of Psychoanalysis, XLIX, 2-3 (1968), 302-5.

observation that only a few patients, with "an intrinsic faith," are actually helped by their faith, regardless whether the content of their meaning-system was conventional religion or atheism.²³⁴

Viktor E. Frankl, reflecting upon his three years in a German concentration camp, argues that a prisoner's meaning-system was critical to his/her survival.²³⁵ Daily confrontation with death and suffering existentially challenges one's meaning-system with questions about the meaning of life, the purpose of suffering and the nature of God. This confrontation can have a positive value in refining and strengthening a person's meaning system and in increasing a sense of personal responsibility and freedom, even amid complete imprisonment.

Finality, temporality, is therefore not only an essential characteristic of human life but also a real factor in its meaningfulness. The meaning of human existence is based upon its irreversible character.²³⁶

From this experience Frankl built a system of psychotherapy called "logotherapy" (Logos=meaning) which assumes an innate human "noetic" or spiritual dimension expressed as the "will-to-meaning." Humans can get sick in this noetic dimension of life (meaninglessness), just as they can get sick in their bodies or psyches. Whether in a concentration camp or not, all people must deal with suffering, loss and death. For Frankl, an adequate meaning-system is essential to the general

²³⁴Kubler-Ross, Death and Dying, pp. 265-66.

²³⁵See Viktor E. Frankl, From Death Camp to Existentialism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959)

²³⁶Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and Soul (New York: Knopf, 1955), p. 73.

maintenance of health and in adjusting to times of severe crisis and loss.²³⁷

The Vietnam War and the prisoner-of-war experiences offer modern American researchers another opportunity to study the role of a person's meaning-system in separation and loss. The Center for Prisoner of War Studies in San Diego has studied the effect of prolonged separation and loss upon the families of prisoners-of-war and missing-in-action service personnel.²³⁸ In a study²³⁹ by Edna J. Hurieta et al., the authors divided 215 wives of POW/MIA servicemen into two groups: those who found religion helpful in coping with the absence/loss of their husbands and those who did not. The former group was associated with greater age, greater activity in church affairs, less tendency to date, and fewer guilt feelings, but the most interesting negative correlation was between religion and "moving on." The term "moving on" was defined as psychological "letting go" of the husband's role in the family and making significant adjustments to life without him, such as beginning to date, a change of residence, beginning full employment and so on. The authors write:

Religion and 'moving on' to a new life may be mutually exclusive; in this case, if the wife holds on to religion, she may feel too much guilt associated with beginning a new life for herself. Perhaps those wives who had reported that religion was of no help were

²³⁷This same insight and approach is shared by other existentialist psychotherapists. See Rollo May, Art of Counseling (Nashville: Cokesbury, 1939).

²³⁸See McCubbin.

²³⁹Edna J. Hurieta et al., "Religion in the POW/MIA Family," in *Ibid.*, pp. 85-93.

also those who had moved on towards a reorganization of the family and a closing out of the husband's role, but not without feelings of guilt and emotional ups and downs which at times included contemplation of suicide.²⁴⁰

This study seems to indicate that religion served as a denial of the reality of the death of the husband, rather than as a facilitator of the grief process. Religion actually blocked the grief process by fostering a clinging to the past and by denying the finality of the loss. This study, however, made no distinction between POW and MIA families which to the mind of this author is a significant oversight. POW wives would have a greater tendency, and rightly so, to believe that their husbands were still alive in Hanoi and thus perceive their loss as temporary. In contrast, the MIA wives had to adjust to the complete absence of any information regarding their husbands' fate. It seems that whether the serviceman was POW or MIA might be a greater variable in the wife's tendency to deny or adjust to the loss than religion per se.

The Pueblo incident in which 82 United States servicemen were captured and imprisoned by North Korea served as another clearly definable incident in which researchers could study the role of a prisoner's meaning-system. Charles V. Ford and Raymond C. Spaulding, who gave psychiatric tests and interviews to the returning prisoners, reported that religious beliefs were not a significant variable in determining well or poor adjustment²⁴¹ to the imprisonment.²⁴² They did

²⁴⁰Ibid., p. 93.

²⁴¹In this study, "well adjustment" was defined as physical and health and reasonable resistance. Compare this to the case of a death of a loved one wherein successful endurance or resistance would be defined as poor adjustment.

²⁴²Charles V. Ford and Raymond C. Spaulding, "The Pueblo Incident:

report that "when crew members were asked about the methods they used to cope with their incarceration, they frequently stated that they maintained a faith in their commanding officer, religion and country."²⁴³ In a follow-up study,²⁴⁴ "faith" was described as "a confidence in the leadership of the crew and the belief that the US government and Navy would not abandon them,"²⁴⁵ and this "faith" appears to be more frequently associated with the well adjusted group.

It seems clear that the term "faith" is used here to refer to both a confident trust and to a system of religious-political beliefs. It is interesting to note that Korean efforts to "brainwash" the American prisoners of war, as with the efforts of the Chinese Communists in the Korean War,²⁴⁶ were aimed at "reforming" the prisoner's meaning-system. They assumed, probably through countless years of experience, that the content of a prisoner's meaning-system and his conviction to it, are key factors in determining their cooperation or resistance to imprisonment.

It is clear from this brief survey that a person's meaning-system is an important variable in determining his/her adjustment to

Psychological Reactions to the Stresses of Imprisonment and Repatriation," American Journal of Psychiatry, CSSIS, 1 (July 1972) 1-26.

²⁴³Ibid., p. 22.

²⁴⁴Charles V. Ford and Raymond C. Spaulding, "The Pueblo Incident: A Comparison of Factors Related to Coping with Extreme Stress," Archives of General Psychiatry, XXIX, 3 (September 1973) 340-43.

²⁴⁵Ibid., p. 341.

²⁴⁶See R. J. Lifton, "Home by Ship: Reaction Patterns of American Prisoners of War Repatriated from North Korea," American Journal of Psychiatry, CS (1954), 732-39.

severe loss, death or hardship. Meaning-system of course must be understood in its broadest sense as any religious, philosophical and/or political set of beliefs. It also appears that the strength of a person's convictions matters as much as the content of those beliefs. It is not clear, however, whether a person's meaning-system plays a facilitative or blocking role in that individual's grief process. In some cases, especially where the loss is perceived as temporary, a meaning-system helps the individual endure the loss or hardship by denying or providing an escape from the finality/reality of the loss. In other cases, especially where the loss is perceived as final, the meaning-system helps the individual by comforting and providing a sense of security amid times of change and loss. In short, religion can be an escape or a comfort. The key variable may be the "psychological health" of the meaning-system itself.

Faith

Among the general body of literature on grief, death and bereavement, much is said of faith, but little is supported, documented or carefully defined. Again, most of what is said is in the "inspirational religious literature." Writers advocate the need for "having faith in God. . . or in the doctors. . . or in life-after-death. . . or in getting well." "Faith" seems to mean a kind of trustful confidence similar to the definition employed in this dissertation, but it is not clear exactly how this kind of faith is related to grief. In the realm of the scientific research on grief, there has been an occasional passing comment or theological appendix that has mentioned the concept of

faith,²⁴⁷ but there have been virtually no empirical or clinical studies conducted on the relationship between faith and grief. Thus there is very little information at all on "faith" as a variable in the grieving/growing process, thus indicating the relatively unexplored nature of this topic, area, issue.

I. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has reviewed and explored the nature and dynamics of grief. It began by surveying the universality of loss experiences in human life and the diverse symptoms that are associated with grief reactions. It became clear that while grief is primarily an emotional process, it includes physical, spiritual and social dimensions as well. It was also noted that grief is best understood not as a single static emotion, but as an emotional process consisting of several distinct phases or elements.

Next, this chapter explored the three major theoretical models for understanding grief: grief as a reaction to loss; grief as separation anxiety; and grief as a function of attachment instincts. It is now possible to formulate a working definition of grief. *Grief is the necessary process of withdrawing emotional attachment from any lost "object" (person, thing, idea, etc.) in which one had invested emotional significance.* It is also the process of emotionally re-investing that energy into new objects. This emotional process begins with the actual,

²⁴⁷Wayne Oates, "Conclusion," in his Pastoral Care. Or Jackson, Faith to Be or Not to Be," in his Understanding Grief, p. 118ff. Or Bernard Schoenberg, "Pastoral Aspects," in his Anticipatory Grief. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 333ff.

perceived or anticipated loss of a valued "object." The key emotional ingredient in this reaction is "separation anxiety," which finds its origins and prototype in the infant's relationship with his/her mother figure. This process is "necessary" in the sense that the successful completion of the grief process is necessary or essential to a person's emotional health and the formulation of new attachments.

Finally, this chapter began a preliminary exploration of those variables that contribute to the facilitation of a person's grief process. The full and free expression of grief feelings is considered to be the most important variable, but questions still remain concerning what variables enable a person to freely and fully express his/her grief. The research literature on the four variables--community, rituals, meaning-system and faith--was reviewed within this chapter's focus on accidental losses. The importance of community and rituals for the facilitation of grief was partially supported, but the evidence on the importance and role of meaning-system and faith was conflicting and incomplete. In the following chapter, these same four variables will be explored again, but this time within the context of developmental losses.

Chapter 3

GRIEF AND THE LIFE CYCLE

"Loss is an integral part of human experience,
a fact which has profound consequences from birth to death."
David Peretz¹

A. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the life span, each person inevitably will face painful separations and losses. Some of these losses will be sudden and tragic; others will be subtle and predictable. Nevertheless in every case, an individual will react with varying degrees and varieties of grief, as his/her psyche seeks to emotionally detach itself from the lost loved one, place or thing. This chapter will explore the role and function of grief in the human life cycle as understood by the growing discipline of life-span psychology. This chapter will focus its examination on three areas. First, it will examine the nature of dynamics of loss in the human life cycle. Arguing that loss is an integral part of the human life cycle, it will therefore be suggested that grief is an inevitable part of the human life-cycle-experience. Methodologically, this chapter shall demonstrate this point by employing both a macroscopic perspective--viewing the whole life cycle at once--and a microscopic perspective--examining one development stage in detail.²

¹David Peretz, "Development, Object-Relationships, and Loss," in Bernard Schoenberg, et al., Loss and Grief (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 6.

²A distinction borrowed from Bühler in Charlotte Bühler and Fred Massarik (eds.) The Course of Human Life (New York: Springer, 1968), pp. 7-10.

Secondly, this chapter will examine the concept of health as uniquely understood by life-cycle theorists; and the key role of developmental growth in maintaining that health. It will be suggested that grief is essential to developmental growth and thus to health. Thirdly, this chapter will examine the four criteria for facilitating grief work, as noted in previous chapters--in the context of the life-span psychology. Here, the nature and role of these variables in facilitating developmental growth will be explored.

B. THE INEVITABILITY OF CHANGE

The simplest and yet most profound insight from life-span psychology is that people change.³ Human beings are not static, monolithic entities that remain essentially the same throughout life, but are dynamic ever-changing processes. This is true not only of the childhood years where changes are rapid and obvious, but it is also true of the adult years. With the passage of time, changes are continuously and for the most part unconsciously occurring. Only occasionally in periods of rapid change or symbolic transitions are people vividly reminded of the ways they have changed.

Developmental changes through the life cycle occur on several different levels. Foremost among them, are the physiological changes. During the first two decades of human life, the human bodily changes are most dramatic. This is a period of "one continuing surge of

³Baltes has defined life-span developmental psychology "as the study of change" in Paul B. Baltes, "Status and Issues of a Life-Span Developmental Psychology," in L. R. Goulet and Paul B. Baltes (eds.) Life-Span Developmental Psychology (New York: Academic Press, 1970), p.4.

growth."⁴ So dramatic is this growth period of life, that some developmental psychologists limit the use of the term "development" to just this period. Between the ages of 20-30, there is a peaking of physical energies and a stationary period of physiological growth. After age 50 there are again rapid physiological changes as the body declines in energies, strengths, and skills. This basic "expansion-restriction model" of human physiological development serves as the foundation for most life cycle schemes.⁵

Life-span psychologists, however, do not limit human development to just the physiological. Nor do they limit it just to the first two decades of life. Life cycle theorists are aware that while physiological development gradually slows and declines, a person's mental, social and psychological powers can continue to grow and develop throughout his/her entire life-span. In fact, Robert Peck has suggested that since these latter qualities represent the true uniqueness of humanity in contrast to animals, people continue to develop as humans throughout all of life. He writes: "Consequently, not all, but some aspects of later life would seem to be developmental in every sense of the word, including the concept of incremental growth in mental and social powers."⁶ In a fuller sense of the word then, people continue to "grow"

⁴Sidney L. Pressey, and Robert G. Kuhlen, Psychological Development Through the Life-Span (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 62.

⁵For example, see Bühler and Massarik, or Pressey and Kuhlen.

⁶Robert C. Peck, "Psychological Developmental in the Second Half of Life," in John E. Anderson (ed.) Psychological Aspects of Aging (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1956), p. 43.

throughout their entire life cycle.

Sidney Pressey has reviewed the evidence of intelligence change over the life-span.⁷ He notes that most researchers conclude that "learning clearly appears to increase through the growth years and begins a slow decline rather soon thereafter."⁸ Studies of creativity achievement and leadership, however, show later peaks. There appears also to be great individual differences and cultural variables. Pressey then suggests a more accurate and complex understanding of intelligence changes:

All of this material considered together suggests that different types of abilities grow and decline at different rates and that mentality changes as an aggregate, and perhaps more subtly in quality, at different stages of development from childhood to old age.⁹

It is also clear that religious inclinations change throughout the life cycle as well. Lawrence Kohlberg has suggested the stages of moral development, a pattern of moral development that is only loosely connected to chronological ages.¹⁰ Others have described changes in religious inclination according to Erik Erikson's eight stages of the life cycle, noting the different religious emphases and interpretations of "faith" that come with different developmental phases.¹¹

⁷See chapters 3-4 of Pressey and Kuhlen, pp. 70-164.

⁸Ibid., p. 92.

⁹Ibid., p. 158.

¹⁰See for example, Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stages and Aging in Moral Development--Some Speculations," *Gerontologist*, XIII, 4 (Winter 1973), 498-502. Or Lawrence Kohlberg, "Moral Development," in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Crowell, Collier, Macmillan, 1968), X, 489-94.

¹¹See LeRody Aden, "Faith and Developmental Cycle," Pastoral Psychology, XXIV, 3 (Spring 1976), 215-30.

It is also clear that the human personality continues to develop throughout the life cycle. Erikson, who is concerned with psychosexual development, suggests that the genuinely human virtues of care and wisdom do not and usually cannot appear until later adulthood.¹² Bernice L. Neugarten, who has studied personality changes in the middle and aged adult, argues that "there are sets of personality processes, primarily intraphysic in nature, which slow developmental changes throughout the life-span."¹³ Charlotte Bühler, who stands firmly within the Humanistic tradition, argues that a person's motivational life changes throughout the life cycle.¹⁴ Motivation during the earliest years is based upon "need satisfaction," whereas during the youth and adult years, the need for "creative expansion" governs the person's life activities.

People also change throughout their life cycle in terms of their social role and status. An individual changes from being a child, to being an adolescent, to being an adult, to being a "senior citizen." In a person's family life, a person changes from being "a single," to a spouse, to a parent, and eventually to a grandparent.¹⁵ A person's career or work-life, is also a continuous and often clearly sequential

¹²See Erik H. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: Norton, 1964).

¹³Bernice L. Neugarten, "Adult Personality: A Developmental View," Human Development, IX (1966), 72.

¹⁴See chapter six of Bühler and Massarik, pp. 92-101.

¹⁵With divorce and remarriage, the "normal" status/role changes become even more complex.

process of changes in status, expressed gradually by changes in salary, titles and responsibilities, ending eventually in retirement.¹⁶ With each change in social status and role, there are corresponding changes in social expectations, age-status behavior, and personality characteristics.

Life cycle theorists have attempted to classify these psychosocial changes in varied ways. Erikson has studied the life cycle in terms of developmental conflicts or crises, relying on the Freudian pattern of psycho-sexual developmental for the pre-adult years.¹⁷ Robert Havighurst has classified developmental phases in terms of developmental tasks, a list of which is associated with each stage and a prerequisite for the next.¹⁸ Bernice Neugarten has classified the life cycle in terms of certain major life events or "marker events."¹⁹ Charlotte Bühler has transposed a set of motivational needs upon an expansion-restriction model of physiological development.²⁰ In a new book by journalist Gail Sheehy, the author has proposed a series of "passages" alternated by relatively stable growth periods for the adult years of 18 to 45.²¹

One of the key issues that dominates any discussion of the life

¹⁶For a good discussion of this topic, see chapter six of Pressey and Kühlen.

¹⁷See Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1963)

¹⁸See Robert J. Havighurst, Developmental Tasks and Education (New York: McKay, -948)

¹⁹See Neugarten.

²⁰See Bühler and Massarik.

²¹See Gail Sheehy, Passages (New York: Dutton, 1974)

cycle is "whether developmental change occurs because of changes within the organism or because of changes external to it."²² The former conviction characterizes the "organismic model" of human development; and the latter characterizes the "mechanistic model."²³ The origin of developmental changes is perhaps more complex than a simple external-internal classification. Some changes lie within the physiological changes of the individual. Puberty, menopause, aging, as well as the rapid physiological changes of childhood are examples of physiological changes that "cause" or stimulate other psycho-social changes. Other external changes are those caused by the individual's social environment or culture. For example, learning to read, going to school, retirement, the legalities of age 18, and to some extent getting married and having children are all socially conditioned changes that originate in the social system and culture's ideology.²⁴ Still other cultural changes, which Erikson terms "accidental crises" (like wars, depressions, and untimely deaths) can initiate or alter the normal sequence of "developmental crises."²⁵ Besides all of these "external" changes, there are also changes that originate in the "personal values and aspirations

²²William Looft, "Socialization and Personality Throughout the Life Span: An Examination of Contemporary Psychological Approaches," in Paul B. Baltes and K. Warren Schaie (eds.) Life-span Developmental Psychology (New York: Academic Press, 1973), p. 29.

²³A classification used by Looft in Ibid.

²⁴Neugarten has worked with "age norms" and "Adult socialization" showing their influence upon the timing of such adult developmental events like marriage and parenthood. See Bernice L. Neugarten, "Age Norms, Age Constraints and Adult Socialization," American Journal of Sociology, LXX (1965), 710-17.

²⁵See Erik H. Erikson, "Identity and Life Cycle: Selected Papers," Psychological Issues, I, 1 (1959)

of the individual."²⁶ This growth impulse expresses itself both in initiating developmental changes and in the unique way that the individual unifies and integrates external stimuli. It seems clear to this author that developmental changes in the life cycle find their origin in any one or all of several on-going dynamic forces, forces both external and internal to the individual.

Three key terms will help clarify these issues. First, life time or chronological age is one way to measure and classify life cycle changes. However, life time is only a rough measurement at best. Only a few marker events are so marked by fixed ages, like retirement at 65 or starting school at age 5. Secondly, social time indicates the psychosocial phase or stage of development and reflects the age-status system of the given society. Neugarten, who has done the most work with the concept of age norms, writes:

Every society has a system of social expectations regarding age-appropriate behavior, and these expectations are internalized as the individual grows up and grows old, and as he moves from one age stratum to the next. There is a time when he is expected to work, to marry, a time to raise children, a time to retire, even a time to grow sick and to die.²⁷

It is clear that social time is a more useful concept in measuring the life cycle than life time. Certain developmental crises are triggered by social events, like children leaving home, which may happen at widely different chronological ages for different people.²⁸ Middle age for

²⁶Havighurst, p. 5.

²⁷Bernice L. Neugarten, "Social Time and the Age Status Structure," in Baltes and Schaie, p. 59.

²⁸Other studies indicate ethnicity, occupations and socioeconomic

one person may be chronologically different than for another person. Most life cycle theorists have given up chronological age especially in the adult years, as only an arbitrary approximation of developmental changes.²⁹

The third key term is historical time which measures the history of a given culture or society. It is clear that certain sociological and cultural changes significantly influence the course, length and character of the human life cycle. For example, the extended periods of education in modern civilization have prolonged the developmental period that Erikson terms "identity crisis." Similarly, the advance of longevity has increased the period of postparenthood and is beginning to distinguish between old and very old age.³⁰ Philippe Aries has remarked that even childhood did not always exist as a major period of the life cycle.³¹ In the future, the emerging pattern of "serial marriages" will significantly alter the "normal" course of human life cycle for future generations. Pressey has summarily made the point vividly:

status are also variables. See Bernice L. Neugarten and Joan Moore, "The Changing Age-status System," in Bernice L. Neugarten (ed.) Middle Age and Aging: A Reader in Social Psychology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968) or Theodore Caplow and McCregy Reece, The Academic Marketplace (New York: Basic, 1958)

²⁹For an excellent discussion of the difference between "social time" and "life time" see Peck and Anderson.

³⁰See Bernice L. Neugarten, "Age Groups in American Society and the Rise of the Young-Old," Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Sciences (September 1974)

³¹See Philippe Aries, Centuries of Childhood (New York: Random House, 1963)

✓ The child growing up in the age of radio and television, air travel, and atomic destruction is surely a somewhat different child in his present existence, and his probable future growth and change, from the youngster of the leisurely, isolated, horse-drawn age of a half-century ago. A present-day developmental psychology of the life-span must describe a creature who in his life course and in his environment is a type of person that never existed before.³²

C. LOSS IN THE LIFE CYCLE

As noted, human beings are continuously changing on many different levels throughout their life cycle. Only at certain transitional or crisis points, however, are people keenly aware of how they have changed and the issues involved therein. The question now arises, "What exactly is it that changes at these transitional points?" This author proposes the concept of attachments (as outlined in the last chapter) as an inclusive and yet precise statement of what changes with each developmental phase. Clearly, every individual attaches him/herself to a wide variety of things, relationships, ideas, places and even to a developmental era itself. This need or instinct to invest oneself emotionally is innate in every healthy human being and occurs unconsciously and pervasively at any and every point in the life cycle.³³ Yet, with each developmental transition, a person must withdraw (voluntarily or involuntarily) emotional investment in those "objects" associated with the developmental phase just completed. For example, when

³²Pressey, p. 20.

✓ ³³The earliest example of the attachment impulse is the "bonding" of an infant to his/her mother in the first weeks of life. The last example is as death approaches. As death approaches, one is reminded again of this basic, innate impulse to attach oneself, in this case, expressed as "hanging onto life."

a person gets married, he/she withdraws emotional investments in those relationships, places, and objects associated with his/her single life, as he/she begins to make significant investments in new relationships, objects and places. Similarly, people throughout their life cycle make emotional investments and withdraw them (voluntarily or involuntarily) as they move on to a new life stage. In fact, one could describe the human life cycle as an alternating process of attachment and loss. The latter half of that dynamic will inevitably involve grief.

The concept of making and withdrawing emotional attachments includes several other concepts proposed by other researchers to describe the same dynamics. David Peretz prefers the concept of "object relations" which is defined as "relations between an individual and the 'things' of his environment in which he invests emotional significance."³⁴ Willard Hartup, who is comfortable with the term "attachment," has outlined techniques for measuring the "changes in attachment pattern with chronological age."³⁵ C. Murray Parkes, based on Kurt Lewin's concept of "life space," has proposed the concept of "assumptive world."³⁶ An assumptive world is the total set of assumptions people make regarding their life, their past/future, and the world. Parkes' assumptive world is based on "affectional bonds":

³⁴Peretz, p. 7.

³⁵Willard W. Hartup, "A Problem in Life-Span Development: the Interectional Analysis of Family Attachments," in Baltes and Warner, p. 235-53.

³⁶Colin M. Parkes, "Psycho-Social Transitions: A Field of Study," Social Science and Medicine, V (1971), 101-15.

A man is tied to his assumptive world. By learning to recognize and act appropriately within his expectable environment a man makes his life space his own. Anything which I can call 'mine'--'my' mob, 'my' home town, 'my' left arm, 'my' wife--become, to some extent, part of myself. To all of these things we are tied by bonds which (with Harlow) I have termed 'affectional bonds.'³⁷

Normally, these affectional bonds or attachments resist severance, but with each transition in one's life cycle, an individual must alter and sometimes give up certain of these emotional attachments. Regardless of the term used, the life cycle seems to inevitably involve the making and withdrawing of emotional attachments.

Developmental changes in one's life cycle can be construed as both gains and/or losses. Losses and gains are two ways of classifying every developmental change. With every developmental transition, an individual loses the life-stage (and its attachments) just completed, but gains access to the next emerging phase. With every transition or passage, there is both loss and gain. Objectively speaking, every developmental transition involves a loss--the loss of the phase just completed and the attachments associated with that phase. It is the irreversible nature of time itself that each life cycle is repeated just once. Therefore, loss is, objectively speaking, inherent in life itself. Subjectively speaking, however, an individual will perceive a given developmental transition predominantly as either a loss or a gain (perhaps both), depending on a wide range of personal factors. One of the determining factors in American culture³⁸ is age. James E.

³⁷Ibid., p. 104.

³⁸In other cultures, where the aged are socially valued, getting older might be perceived more readily as a gain.

Birren writes:

Events take on different meanings with age. The child may be pleased with the loss of a tooth; it is a sign of growing up. To the middle-aged, the loss of a tooth may be another sign of physical erosion, a disquieting sign, like greying hair.³⁹

This distinction fits with the basic "expansion-contraction" model of the human life cycle. The first half of life is focused on "fulfilling expansion needs."⁴⁰ Thus, most developmental changes are perceived of as gains. The second half of life, however, is dominated by the contraction theme. Here, developmental transitions are more often perceived of as losses. Pressey writes:

Evidence of continued gains are satisfying and sought after; losses tend to be threatening and to evoke defensive reactions. Assuming the existence of these two opposed needs--the first more dominant in younger adult years, the latter increasingly important as age increased--helps to relate in a meaningful way a variety of behavioral and personality changes during the adult years. . . .⁴¹

Thus, while present throughout the life cycle, loss is easier to document in the latter half of life.

Loss in the Second Half of the Life-cycle

With advancing age in the second half of life, an individual inevitably encounters losses that are probably quantitatively and

³⁹James E. Birren, "Reaction to Loss and the Process of Aging: Interrelations of Environmental Changes, Psychological Capacities and Physiological Status," in Martin D. Berezin and Stanley H. Cath (eds.) Geriatric Psychiatry (New York: International Universities Press, 1967), p. 99.

⁴⁰The concept of the dominant role of "expansion" needs in the first half of life is associated with Bühler.

⁴¹Pressey, p. 293.

qualitatively greater than any that he/she has previously experienced. For example, there is the increased frequency of the death of friends, colleagues, relatives, parents, and one's spouse. "It is axiomatic to point out," writes Martin A. Berezin, "the the older one gets, the more one experiences the loss of significant persons. The aging person has, of necessity, to undergo more and more grief reactions. . . ."42 There is also the loss of one's job or career and with it the loss of status, money, and independence. As one's body and health deteriorate, there are the losses of bodily function, like loss of sight, hearing, mobility, self-care, and to some extent sex drive.⁴³ With retirement or the death of one's spouse, an individual frequently must give up his/her "home" and move (voluntarily or involuntarily) into a "home for the aged." The loss of one's home often includes the loss of a home-town, some cherished possessions, a familiar routine, and again, independence. Many aged citizens also speak of the loss of self-respect and the respect of others, as their wisdom and counsel are increasingly disregarded by younger members of society. All of these losses are not only significant in their own right, but the frequency of their occurrence in the latter half of life compounds their effect upon the individual. It seems clear to this author that "loss and grief must therefore be regarded as integral components of later life."⁴⁴

⁴²Martin A. Berezin, "Introduction," in Berezin and Cath, p. 18.

⁴³For a discussion of the loss of bodily functions in the aged, see Alexander R. Broden, "Reaction to Loss in the Aged," in Schoenberg, pp. 199-217.

⁴⁴Elizabeth R. Zetzel, "Dynamics of Metapsychology of the Aging Process," in Berezin and Cath, p. 109.

It seems logical, therefore, that the rapidity of loss events in the latter half of life would account for some of the personality changes associated with the aged.⁴⁵ Increased rigidity and conservatism, for example, can be understood as a product of "increased anxiety and threat due to the losses of aging." Raymond G. Kuhlen suggests that with increased threat and anxiety, there is "an increased need to conserve and to protect against losses, a need that often evidences itself in negative defensiveness and thus can prove self-limiting and handicapping."⁴⁶ Birren, in discussing the psychology of aging, suggests that the increased narcissism associated with the aged, can also be understood as an "adaptive reaction" to the increased losses and changes of later life.⁴⁷ The concept of grief as a function of attachment throws further light on this dynamic. After repeated significant and rapid losses, older people start making fewer and less intense emotional investments in their environment, as a protection against further inevitable loss. Birren writes:

If older persons seem better able to manage bereavements in late life, it may well be that they have withdrawn some investment. This view implies that older persons when faced with frequent losses, withdraw their affective investment in persons and objects to avoid the consequences of likely loss.⁴⁸

⁴⁵For a full discussion of personality changes in late life see Bernice L. Neugarten, Personality in Middle and Later Life (New York: Atherton Press, 1964)

⁴⁶Raymond G. Kuhlen, "Changing Personality Adjustment During the Adult Years," in Anderson, p. 26.

⁴⁷James E. Birren, The Psychology of Aging (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 284.

⁴⁸Ibid.

Thus many of the personality changes associated with the aged can be effectively understood at least in part by understanding the dynamics of grief which inevitably dominates much of later life.

One of the most clearly definable loss-events in later life, and therefore one of the easiest to research is retirement. Robert C. Hatchley's study⁴⁹ of retirement noted that one-third of his sample encountered difficulties in adjusting to retirement, the most difficult factor being the reduced income. In 22% of the cases, individuals expressed strong feelings of "missing one's job." Apparently, these grief feelings involve not just the loss of money, but the loss of status, peer group, friendships, routine and self-worth as well. Hatchley's study concluded that the impact of this loss depended upon a person's "hierarchy of personal goals." The higher work or job was in an individual's personal hierarchy of goals, the more difficulty he/she experienced in adjusting to retirement.

This insight was also noted in the classic study⁵⁰ of retirement by Friedmann and Havighurst in 1954. They noted that a person's adjustment to retirement depended upon the "meaning of work" to the individual involved.⁵¹ If a job was just a "means of earning a living," there was less difficulty; but if the job had "important intrinsic values" as well, there was inevitably greater difficulty in adjusting

⁴⁹Robert C. Hatchley, "Adjustment to Loss of Job at Retirement," Aging and Human Development, VI, 1 (1975), 17-27.

⁵⁰E. A. Friedmann and R. J. Havighurst, The Meaning of Work and Retirement (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954)

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 194.

to its absence. Again, this finding confirms the principle that the severity of a grief reaction generally depends upon the intensity of the emotional investment in the loss object. In the case of retirement, the more meaning or investment an individual gives to employment, the greater the intensity of his/her loss. Where this research does not support this principle is in suggesting that there is a simple equation between the intensity of an individual's attachment to a lost object and his/her difficulty in adjusting to that loss. The work of this dissertation suggests that a successful or pathological resolution of a grief reaction, regardless of how minor or severe, will depend on a host of other personal and environmental variables other than the simple intensity of the attachment. This research evidence on retirement, however, does generally support the presence of loss and grief reactions which is the issue at hand.

One of the most insightful and comprehensive theories of the aging process in the second half of life is the "disengagement theory," first proposed by Elaine Cummings and William E. Henry in 1965.⁵² To Cummings and Henry aging is the "inevitable mutual withdrawal or disengagement resulting in decreased interaction between the aging person and others in the social systems he belongs to."⁵³ They attempted to document this disengagement process by noting that "the aging person sees fewer kinds of people, less often, and for decreasing periods of

⁵²Elaine Cumming and W. E. Henry, Growing Old (New York: Basic, 1964).

⁵³Ibid., p. 14.

time as he grows older."⁵⁴ They also noted certain attitudinal changes, generalized as "increased self-preoccupation and decreased response to normative control."⁵⁵ In short, older people not only had less contact with others, but also cared less about the approval or rewards of others. According to Cummings and Henry, this disengagement process begins in middle age with "the first awareness of the shortness of life, a decreasing life-space, and less available ego energy." While it never completely ends, a person and his/her social systems are said to be fully disengaged from each other when that person is firmly entrenched in old age (after retirement and death of spouse).⁵⁶

There have been several refinements of this theory over recent years,⁵⁷ but its basic description of the mutual disengaging process has remained intact. This author would suggest that it is possible to understand this "disengaging process" as a gradual withdrawing of emotional attachments, or if you will, a gradual grieving process, as the aging individual encounters successive loss experiences. Characterizing the entire second half of life as a "disengaging process" highlights the pervasive and powerful presence of loss and grief in the latter half of life-cycle.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 51.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 127.

⁵⁶Ibid., see pp. 147ff.

⁵⁷For example, Streib and Schneider proposed a "differential disengagement," implying that a person disengages at different rates for different roles and occupations. And Neugarten has argued that the "psychological components of disengagement begins with the individual rather than as a reaction to outer changes in the environment. See Neugarten, Personality in Middle and Later Life, pp. 194ff.

The sense of loss that accompanies growing older can perhaps be better described by the artist and the poet than by the research scientist. In the popular musical, "Fiddler on the Roof," Tevye and Golde pause during the marriage ceremony of their daughter to reflect musically on the passing of time. The lyrics of their moving and nostalgic song are:

Is this the little girl I carried?
Is this the little boy at play?
I don't remember growing older
When did they?
When did she get to be a beauty?
When did he grow to be so tall?
Wasn't it yesterday when they were small?

Sunrise, Sunset; Sunrise, Sunset, swiftly flow the days,
Seedlings turn over-night to sunflowers, blooming even as we gaze.

Sunrise, Sunset; Sunrise, Sunset, swiftly fly the years
One season following another, laden with happiness and tears.⁵⁸

Most parents can identify with the loss and grief feelings that accompany the rapid growth of children. Graduations, weddings, and confirmations become the developmental "marker events" not only for the children's lives, but also for the life cycle of their parents as well. Similarly, birthdays and anniversaries also mark the passing of time and dimly remind a person that he/she is one year older. With each passing year, a person not only loses the previous developmental stage, but time itself. In this latter sense, there is a pervasive almost existential loss that surrounds and permeates life itself. While loss is present throughout the entire life cycle the awareness of loss grows

⁵⁸"Sunrise, Sunset," taken from United Artists Records, 1971. Used with permission.

more keenly in the second half of life.

Loss in the First Half of the Life-cycle

The presence of loss in the first half of life is more difficult to document from clinical research. While change is continuous and sometimes traumatic in early life, most developmental changes are subjectively perceived as gains (or growth), and only secondarily as losses. Nevertheless, objectively speaking, every developmental transition involves a loss: the loss of the previous stage and the attachments associated with it. Research evidence, documenting the presence and role of loss in the first half of life is spotty. Therefore, this author can only describe the dynamics of loss and grief as they are generally experienced.

Many writers and researchers⁵⁹ perceive birth itself as a significant, perhaps the most significant loss, in the human life cycle. From the relative security of intrauterine life, a human infant is suddenly pushed into a life of stark brightness, extreme temperature changes and a new fearful "separateness." The recent development of the Lamaze⁶⁰ and LaBoyer⁶¹ methods of childbirth seek to minimize the

⁵⁹For example, see Otto Rank, The Birth Trauma (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929).

⁶⁰See Fernand Lamaze, Painless Childbirth (London: Burke, 1958), originally published as "Qu'est-ce que l'Accouchement sans Douleur?" (Paris: 1956) or Marjorie Karmel, Thank You, Dr. Lamaze (New York: Lippincott, 1959).

⁶¹See Frederick Le Boyer, Birth Without Violence (New York: Knopf, 1976).

traumatic effects of this basic and primal loss for the infant.⁶²

Psychoanalytic writers have focused on the loss of the mother's breast (or bottle) in weaning as the next significant loss-event.⁶³ Here, the infant loses not only the nourishment of the breast, but the warmth, security, and intimacy of this special relationship with mother. Psychoanalysts suggest that if this transitional event is handled poorly--too late, too suddenly, too early or too anxiously--a profound sense of loss can negatively affect all future emotional development of the individual. For this reason the international organization of nursing mothers, the La Leche League, teaches that weaning should occur at the child's initiative, not at the mother's convenience or the culture's norms.⁶⁴ Only by waiting until then, when the child is ready, can the negative effects of this inevitable loss be minimized. In the terminology of this dissertation, this means that if a child is weaned sooner than he/she is ready, the sense of loss will be multiplied and the grief process made more difficult by resistance, anxiety and regression.

Childhood seems to be a time of repeated and inevitable losses. Many of these attachments and losses occur gradually and willingly. A

⁶²The LaMaze and LaBoyer methods in varying degrees recommend among other things the reduction of the lighting, the normalization of temperatures, the elimination of drugs whenever possible, and the keeping of the new infant next to his/her mother's body immediately after birth. All of these procedures and others are designed to minimize the trauma, and "separateness," and the loss associated with birth for the infant.

⁶³Psychoanalytic and life cycle theorist, Erikson, holds this point of view; see his "Identity and the Life Cycle," pp. 50-100.

⁶⁴The Womanly Art of Breast Feeding (Franklin Park, IL: La Leche League International, 1958).

young child will adopt a favorite doll, book, toy or friend, only to give up these "objects" a year later when new attachments appropriate to the older age take their place. The once favorite toy is now rejected with the declaration, "That's for babies!" At other times a child will temporarily resist a significant loss and attempt to return to a time prior to the loss by means of a psychological mechanism known as regression.⁶⁵ Robert A. Furman, who writes of children and death, describes a delightful and relatively mild example of this dynamic:

A nursery schooler had just mastered tying her own shoe laces, something that had taken her weeks of diligent effort to achieve. She was duly proud of her new skill, and even untied her shoes before her grandparents to be able to demonstrate this accomplishment. But one afternoon she suddenly balked at tying her laces. [After several days of this behavior] her mother was puzzled and pointed out how proud she had been of her grown-up skill. Her daughter was thoughtful, but then replied, 'Yes, but I do sometimes miss your doing it for me.'⁶⁶

Many families encounter behavioral problems with the oldest child when a new baby brother or sister takes the cherished "center-stage" position in the family.⁶⁷ The older child now senses the loss of attention, affection, and dependency upon the parents that he/she once enjoyed exclusively. Temporary behavioral problems or attempts to "regress," can be understood as a compressed and compounded attempt to "act out"

⁶⁵For the presence of regression with children encountering severe loss, see Erna Furmann, A Child's Parent Dies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

⁶⁶Robert A. Furman, "The Child's Reaction to Death in the Family," in Schoenberg, pp. 73-74.

⁶⁷Many parent education books describe and give aid on this difficulty. See Burton L. White, The First Three Years of Life (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975) or Fitzhugh Dodson, How to Parent (New York: New American Library, 1970).

his/her grief feelings. Obviously, the more that parents can prepare the older child for this loss, by accepting his/her feelings and encouraging his/her participation in the birth event,⁶⁸ the greater will be the likelihood that the older child's grief feelings will be resolved in a gradual and natural process.

The modern educational process also provides the environment for many of our most significant attachments and losses. The "first-day of school" itself is often a significant symbolic transitional event in the life cycle of a child. It is a "marker event" that symbolizes the transition of the child's primary institutional focus from the family to the school. Similarly with each grade level and each school, a child makes emotional attachments to favorite teachers, coaches, friends, classes, activities, accomplishments and even "eras." Then with graduation, the individual leaves behind (voluntarily or involuntarily) those attachments for new ones. It is little wonder that most graduation ceremonies are characterized by nostalgia and weeping--two expressions of grief. Nevertheless, if an individual is emotionally "ready," the transition is smooth, however emotional; but if he/she is not ready, he/she will resist the loss through various defense mechanisms, such as idealization, regression, repression and identification. The current surge of popular interest in the media for the 1950s era⁶⁹ reflects one generation's attempt to recapture through

⁶⁸Dr. Lendon Smith has directed and narrated an excellent film for children, called "My Mother is Having a Baby" which was recently shown on ABC Television in Los Angeles.

⁶⁹The television program "Happy Days" is currently in the top ten of the Neilson ratings.

✓ idealization such a "time of their life." By so doing, they are giving expression to their feelings of grief.

Many people report that the passing from childhood or adolescence into adulthood is marked by a profound, an almost existential, sense of loss. Associated with childhood is a certain innocence and purity that many feel is lost in adulthood. Certain symbolic events, like first learning that Santa Claus is a myth, first realizing that one's parents err, one's first sexual experience, or first personal confrontation with death seem emotionally to "mark" this transition from childhood to adulthood. On such occasions and in retrospect years later, one may be struck by a profound sense of loss. Thus parents futilely advise their children "to enjoy themselves while they are young". . . for soon it will be lost. The same sense of loss is reflected mythologically in the Biblical account of the Fall, which seems to give expression to this loss of innocence and purity associated with childhood.

At first it seems off to suggest that loss and grief are associated with the "happy" occasion of getting married, but the transition to marital life inevitably involves the loss of one's single life. That single life includes a certain routine, freedom and independence. It includes special friends and a special tie to one's family. It includes romantic hopes and fantasies about one's self-image and potential mate. All of these things are given up or displaced by new emotional attachments associated with marital life and commitments.⁷⁰ At the occasion

⁷⁰An understanding of the systems theory approach to families

of the wedding, this loss of one's single life is marked in the rituals of a groom's "bachelor party" and a bride's "wedding shower."⁷¹ If a person is sufficiently ready to give up his/her single life, then he/she is emotionally free to invest him/herself fully in marital life. Many marriage counselors,⁷² however, can document the dangerous effects of not being ready. Usually this surfaces 5-10 years later, when one partner typically feels a sense of loss, like he/she "never really got it out of their system." Typically, this situation was created when a couple got married at too early an age. In the terms of this dissertation, this dynamic could be understood as a delayed grief reaction.

The advent of parenthood is another seemingly happy event that does not appear at first glance to involve loss and grief. After childbirth, however, a new mother is said to feel "post partum blues."⁷³ Peretz writes that a new mother,

. . . loses a part of herself in giving birth to her baby and in addition may lose whatever special feeling, attention or importance

would highlight the loss dimension in a wedding for other members of the families. Every change in a family system necessitates changes in all other members of that system as well as the system as a whole. This phenomenon accounts in part for the expression of tears usually associated with the immediate family at weddings.

⁷¹The typical dominant tone of the bachelor party is "regret;" whereas the dominant tone of the wedding shower is "anxious anticipation," a difference that vividly illustrates the culture's sexism.

⁷²Many marriage counselors advise against early marriages for life-cycle reasons. See Rubin and Gertrude Blanck, Marriage and Personal Development (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968). Life-cycle theorist, Erikson also advises against early marriages for the same reason; see Richard I. Evans, Dialogue with Erik Erikson (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 49.

⁷³There may also be a chemical-physiological component to this reaction.

was attached to pregnancy. An experience of loss may accompany change even where there is elation and excitement.⁷⁴

The new father can also experience a sense of loss, associated with the redirecting of his wife's energies and attention to the new infant. Suddenly, he is "ignored" where once he was his wife's prime object of care and affection. Thus the arrival of a new baby inevitably involves a life cycle transition in the lives of the parents, as well as the new child itself. In fact from birth on, every transitional event in the life of the child will also initiate change (loss and gain) in the life cycle of the parents. Weaning and the first-day of school, for example, are often greater traumatic loss-events for the mother than for the child. With the marriage of one's daughter, friends say, "you're not losing a daughter, you're gaining a son." Each of the events and the many more in-between call upon parents gracefully to "let go" of the passing stages in their family's and their own life cycle. Perhaps effective parenting could be described as knowing when gracefully to let go of old methods and responses as one's children continuously grow toward independence and self-sufficiency.

So, while the transitional changes in the first half of life are not primarily experienced as losses, loss is nevertheless present. In fact, loss is inevitably present in all of the life cycle, because humans inevitably form emotional attachments and because change is an inevitable part of the life cycle, causing one to lose certain of those attachments with the passing of time. John Bowlby writes:

⁷⁴Peretz, p. 9-10.

In so far as attachments to loved figures are an integral part of our lives, a potential to feel distress (grief) is an integral part of our lives, a potential to feel distress on separation from them and anxiety at the prospect of separation. . . .⁷⁵

Whenever attachments are "ruptured," even by the willing and gradual transitions of the life cycle, there will inevitably be grief feelings.

D. THE MIDLIFE PASSAGE: A CLINICAL INTERLUDE

The presence and role of loss in the life cycle will now be explored from the microscopic perspective, that is, by examining one developmental stage in detail. The following case study will illustrate the dynamics of loss in "middle-age" persons. This case represents real people,⁷⁶ selected for illustrative purposes from this author's own counseling practice. The verbatim excerpts have been reconstructed from tapes and notes.

Joyce and John Robertson are a white, upper-middle class married couple, ages 48 and 45 respectively. They have been married for over 20 years, with three children: Jill (21); Joy (16) and Jack (14). Joyce originally initiated counseling, for herself, feeling overwhelmed at that time by a deteriorating marriage, due in part to John's increased drinking, behavioral problems, including drug use in the youngest boy, Jack, and a recent car accident involving the oldest daughter and the failing health of Joyce's mother. In the course of the two years to follow, this author had occasion to counsel with nearly every

⁷⁵John Bowlby, Attachment and Loss (New York: Basic, 1973), p. 56.

⁷⁶The names and non-essential details have been disguised to protect their confidentiality.

member of the family in both individual and conjoint sessions. The following excerpt is from one of Joyce's private counseling sessions, and took place relatively early in her treatment.

Counselor: How has life been treating you this week?

Joyce: Mother has gotten worse.

C2: Oh?

J3: Yeah, Dad called this week from Reno. She has taken a turn for the worse again. For awhile there, she seemed better. . . . talking more . . . walking about the house. Now she is back to the wheelchair. Dad says she's in great pain. He must give her these shots four times a day now.

C3: He is at her side all day?

J4: Yes, he won't hire a nurse or put her in a hospital. Tom [her brother] and I tried to persuade him to hire a live-in nurse last month when we were there, but he won't hear of it. He stays by her day and night . . . sleeps in a bed next to hers upstairs.

C4: Very stubborn man.

J5: Yes, he's always been that way . . . very independent and determined. He doesn't want any one's help. I guess he doesn't trust doctors either . . . [digression about earlier family incident with doctors].

C5: You're saying he's a distrustful person.

J6: No, not really, not to us kids anyhow. Dad and I have always been close. He's been very warm and demonstrative with me . . . lots of affection and encouragement. He's so unlike John . . . I've always missed that. John just isn't very expressive of his emotions . . . the engineer type. They're all alike!

C6: You compare John to your Father a lot. That's probably not fair to either one of them.

J7: I know. . . . (silence)

C7: You look sad . . . like you're really missing your Dad, right now.

J8: Yeah, I was just thinking about some of the times when we were younger. He use to take me fishing a lot . . . and he was the one who first taught me to play tennis. I guess I picked up my competitiveness from him.

C8: . . . And your sensitivity?

J9: Yes (slight smile) . . . that, too. I always knew his feelings. I could see right through him. He'd be hurt . . . or sad . . . or upset, I could tell, just from looking at him (silence)

C9: You were close to your Dad.

J10: Why do you say "were"?

C10: Because you sound sad . . . like you lost something special with him that you no longer have.

J11: I guess you're right. We aren't that close now . . . and now

- is the time when I really need him, too . . . (pause)
- C11: Say more about that.
- J12: Well, with Jill's car accident last March, I've been so worried about her. We weren't sure she'd ever see again for a while there . . . and now the plastic surgery operations over and over again. Thank God they're over now.
- C12: And Jack's troubles.
- J13: Yes, Jack, too. He's on dope again. I just know it. But every time I ask him, he looks me right in the face and lies, I know it. [small digression on Jack's troubles]
- J14: Last year when I went to see Mother, I was really going partly for myself, too. I really wanted to talk with Dad about all of this.
- C14: And?
- J15: Well, he wasn't the same. He was so worried about Mother. I hardly had any time with him alone, like we used to. And he looked so, so old . . . his hair was so grey and he looked so tired and
- C15: . . . old?
- J16: Yes, older. They both looked older. I guess Mother's illness has really taken a lot out of him . . . more than I thought.
- C16: That sounds like an important insight . . . you were hurting and in need of support and affection; you went to visit Dad, hoping he could comfort you, like before, but he had changed. He ignored you. Is that too strong a word?
- J16: No, I guess not. He didn't have time for me. I spent most of the time comforting him, listening to his troubles with doctors . . . insurance . . . mother's medicine. You know . . . all that.
- C17: You have to parent your parent.
- J18: Yes, I never thought of it that way, but that's it. And I wanted Dad to comfort me I'm the one who's hurting these days . . . (sadness)
- C18: You lost something very special with your Dad, haven't you?
- J19: (She starts to cry)
- C19: (Comforting her, and yet encouraging the tears) You're no longer the little girl who can run to her Daddy. Daddy is no longer there.

The mid-years crisis is roughly defined as between the ages of 40 and 60.⁷⁷ It marks the passage of an individual through the midpoint of the life cycle and into old age. Most people during this

⁷⁷ See Neugarten, Middle Age and Aging. Other authors set the age limits slightly differently.

period first encounter the aging, ill-health and deaths of their parents. The financial strains of an aging and/or ill parent can be enormous in these inflationary times. A child or two in college during this same period multiplies the problems. The financial drain comes from both ends of the life-cycle during this period--from one's parents and one's children. Similarly, the psychological resources are also being drained from both ends. Increasingly, one's aging parents demand more comfort than they give and the comfort that one may have derived from an intimate relationship with his/her children is lost in teenage rebellion. The mid-years person is at the financial and emotional zenith of the life-cycle with everybody depending on him/her and fewer people on whom he/she can depend.

In this excerpt Joyce is painfully aware of the approaching death of her ill and aging mother. In addition she keenly feels the loss of her father's presence and availability. Their previous idyllic relationship in which he was able to respond fully to all her needs is now lost. The father's resources are limited and fully focused on his ill wife. There has been a subtle and yet significant reversal of the roles between Joyce and her father. Whereas in the past, he parented her, now she must parent him. Lost is that past relationship between father and daughter that she especially longs for now when her life seems so overwhelming. In order for Joyce to grow developmentally, she (and her father) must work to "let go" of that idyllic relationship and formulate a new relationship based on present realities. By so doing, she will be withdrawing emotional attachment to those old roles and re-investing herself in a new relationship.

Eventually, Joyce's parents will die (her mother recently died). This loss will bring with it a new significant life-cycle transition. Suddenly, a mid-years person is the "head of the family," a senior member of the family and the patriarch or matriarch of the clan. Suddenly, there is no parent to turn to when he/she is in need. With this transition, "an existential chill settles over the psyche of a mid-years person"⁷⁸ as he/she realizes that he/she is "next in line." The anticipated loss of one's own health and eventually of one's own life looms increasingly clear. "The most painful and difficult part of being middle-aged," writes Eda LeShan, "is that old age and dying are no longer ridiculous abstractions."⁷⁹ Thus the gradual and eventual loss of one's parents is an integral part of the mid-years crisis, a loss that initiates (and marks) significant life-cycle transitions.

John Robertson repeatedly refused to acknowledge that he had a problem, either personal or marital. He therefore refused any counseling for himself. On one occasion, however, Joyce was sick and he kept the appointment alone.

Counselor: I am glad for this opportunity to meet with you separately. I would like to know more about your life, background and beliefs. You're an engineer for Honeywell, right?

John: Yes, I've been there for close to 20 years. It's a good company. They've been fair by me over the years.

C2: What do you do there?

J2: I'm in naval research. We design new radar and sonar equipment for the Navy. Right now, we're working on a new version of the A-12 SCAN computer [digression on work]

⁷⁸Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Growth Counseling for Mid-Years Couples (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 65.

⁷⁹Eda LeShan, The Wonderful Crisis of Middle Age (New York: McKay, 1973), p. 288.

- C3: You seem to enjoy your work.
 J3: Yes, I do. It's interesting and rewarding work.
 C4: Do you feel you have good job security there?
 J4: Yes, certainly.
 C5: I ask because my father lost his job at Lockheed last year and at his age he is having a hell of a time finding work. It seems these big companies prefer hiring younger men, fresh out of college over the older experienced man.
 J5: I see that at work, too. There is some real competition among these big companies for these younger brains from MIT and Cal Tech.
 C6: Do these young men get promoted ahead of the veterans?
 J6: Sometimes, if they've got the stuff.
 C7: Have you ever been passed over for a promotion?
 J7: What do you mean?
 C8: What I mean is, how do you feel about your career right now?
 J8: Well, I would rather stay where I am, in research. I enjoy research. I have no ambition to be one of those executive types. All they do all day is sit on their butts and make trouble for us researchers. We're the ones who really keep this company on its feet. Those over-night executives think they know it all just because they got a diploma on their wall.
 C9: I'm sensing some resentment in your attitude.
 J9: Some, I just don't care for their attitude. They think they know it all, and can push everybody else around. But, like I said, I enjoy my job. I wouldn't take their job if they paid me.
 C10: So you think you'll stay in research.
 J10: As long as possible.
 C11: What do you mean "as long as possible."
 J11: Like you said, I could always lose my job or something. But that's not likely.
 C12: They really need you in research.
 J12: They sure do.
 C13: Is your work a high pressure job, with lots of tension?
 J13: Yes, I suppose so, but no more than others. We all have deadlines to meet. And we must be precise. If we're off by 1/1000 of an inch, the whole damn thing doesn't work, you know what I mean?
 C14: Yes, I think so. Is that why you drink, I mean, to cope with the pressure?
 J14: Now, wait a minute. We've been over this before. I told you "I don't have a drinking problem." So I have a few drinks after work. I deserve it. It's a rough world out there. Joyce just doesn't appreciate what I have to go through in order to keep food on the table. But instead of thanking me, all she does is nag me about my drinking.
 C15: She is very concerned about your drinking and your health in general.
 J15: Like I said, it's not a problem to me. I do my job, keep the bills paid, and the house repaired. I'm not like some drunk

on skid row or something. I'm an intelligent research engineer and navy veteran.

C16: How about your marriage and the kids? Are you coping as well there?

J16: What do you mean?

C17: Whether you think you have a drinking problem or not, that's really an academic question. The point of fact is that Joyce has some strong feelings about your drinking that block and divide you two. It's coming between you. And I bet the kids might have some feelings about the drinking, too. Have you ever asked them, say, Jack?

J17: Joyce has been filling your head with all her nonsense. She always exaggerates everything. She's even turned the kids against me--telling them I'm sick, like an alcoholic or something. No wonder the boy doesn't respect me any more.

C18: You're not respected much . . . and if Jack did, he wouldn't be in trouble.

J18: No, I'm sure not [respected much]. If you're looking for the source of our problems, there's your answer, boy! It's Joyce's nagging and exaggerating. Everything is a crisis for her. There is never any peace in our home.

(Conversation continues onto marital issues)

Typically in United States culture, the middle age man marks his mid-life crisis by career changes, as opposed to the woman who marks her crisis point by family changes.⁸⁰ Around this age, the man's career begins to ebb, as younger people begin to be promoted around him. He has a sense of having "plateaued out," but the financial pressures of aging parents and college-bound children make it more difficult than ever to change jobs or start a new career. He feels "trapped" in a situation that is increasingly less fulfilling and literally dangerous to his health. It is little wonder that middle age men show unusually high incidences of alcoholism, heart attacks and general poor health.⁸¹

⁸⁰See Bernice L. Neugarten and Charlotte Paterson, "A Study of the American Age-Grade System," in Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the International Association of Gerontology, III (1957).

⁸¹See Herb Goldberg, The Hazards of Being Male (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976).

This excerpt from an interview with John Robertson reveals most of these same features of the male mid-years passage: career plateauing and increasing poor health. In John's case, however, there is very little willingness to acknowledge these realities. He is defensively resistive to all attempts to persuade him that he has some problem. Yet the anxiety and pressure that he tries so stubbornly to ignore is revealed so dramatically through his increased alcoholism.

A successful "mid-course correction" for John will be more difficult than for his wife who will be forced to alter her life when the children leave home. Unless a traumatic crisis, like a heart attack or marital dissolution, "shocks" him into some realization of his situation, he will go on "waiting it out 'til retirement." He is a vivid reminder that a full realization of the painful realities of one's losses is a necessary prerequisite to any growth, developmentally or otherwise.

The following excerpt took place suddenly one week, after an emergency call:

Joyce: Boy, have I got a crisis for you today. I tried calling you last week, but couldn't reach you.

Counselor: What is it . . . (he asks with fear and trembling [smile])

J2: Well, this is embarrassing. I don't know quite how to say this.

C2: Just spit it out.

J3: Well, Joy got herself pregnant. Apparently she and her boyfriend have been sleeping together all year.

C3: Wow, that must have shocked you.

J4: Yes, it did. She went to the doctor's office herself to be tested. Then, she came to tell me that she was going to have an abortion . . . just like that. She was going to pay for that herself, too, just like the doctor's visit. Of course, we won't hear of it. Her father and I will pay for it, and in the best hospital, too. None of these junky places.

C4: Where is the boy in all of this?

- J5: He knows everything. He's been very concerned. He came over one night last week to talk to us. I really felt sorry for him. He was so embarrassed about it. We spent a lot of awkward moments, just sitting there, looking at each other.
- C5: Do you feel the conversation was helpful?
- J6: Yes, I guess so. What really upsets me, though, was their casual attitude. Neither of them thought it was that big of a deal. They were going to get an abortion . . . just like that.
- C6: You feel it's more serious than that.
- J7: I certainly do. I wasn't brought up that way. And I didn't think Joy was either. At sixteen years old, you don't go sleeping with every guy in town, like it's shaking hands or something. I didn't teach Joy that.
- C7: I know that you didn't. She seems to have her own moral opinions--opinions different than yours.
- J8: She sure does, and I don't like it. I'll never approve of that sort of thing (digression here into Church and morals).
- C8: You really seem very, very angry. Did you tell her all of this?
- J9: Yes, we did talk it all out. We all said our piece. . . except for John (another small digression about John's silence). I thought we had worked it all out pretty well. We agreed to pay for it--but at a good hospital, of course.
- C9: What happened next?
- J10: Well, this, too, really hurt. We all went to the hospital and waited through most of the operation . . . Chris [the boyfriend] and I. Then after the operation, when Joy was just coming out of the drug, apparently, she asked to see Chris. The nurse came out to the waiting room and called Chris's name to go in to see her. (Pause) I went up to the nurse, introduced myself as "Mrs. Robertson, I'm Joy's mother. Doesn't she want to see me, too?" The nurse said, "No, Miss Robertson just asked for Chris Small. You'll have to wait out here, madam." (voice cracks)
- C10: Ouch, that hurt.
- J11: It sure did. Well, I couldn't wait there any longer, like a fool or something. So after a few minutes, I went home. I figured Chris could give her a ride home. I wasn't needed.
- C11: Did you talk about it later?
- J12: Yes, we did. And she asked me why I went home. She wanted me there, too, but it didn't matter, the damage was done.
- C12: What damage?
- J13: Well, it hurt me.
- C13: Say more.
- J14: Well, it hurt, that's all! (pause) I'm just not needed any more. I can't get used to that. For so many years, I was their mother . . . not just to Joy, but all three of them. They needed me to do this or that for them. And, I'm not complaining. I felt it was important to be there after school, or at their sports games, or when they fell and hurt themselves.

- That's what mothers are for.
- C14: But now?
- J15: Now, they just don't seem to need me anymore. All I get from Jack is sass and back-talk. Jill went through that whole operation last year, didn't want to confide in me once, like she used to. I was so worried about her because she kept it all in--never talked it out--just like her father.
- C15: And now, Joy doesn't need you anymore, either.
- J16: No, I guess not . . . It's a sad thing, isn't it? When your children begin to grow up and leave home. I suppose it's normal and I wouldn't want it any other way, really, but it is hard to adjust to.
- C16: Yes it is, especially so when your marriage isn't the greatest. There isn't that primary relationship to fall back on.
- J17: Yes, that's for sure. John is no help at all.
- C17: (silence) . . . kind of a lonely place, ugh?
- J18: (she begins to cry, following which, the session moves on to the marriage)

In this excerpt Joyce is initially angry and disappointed about
 ✓ Joyce's sexual indiscretion. Later it becomes apparent that her deeper feelings are sadness and grief over the gradual psychological loss of her children. Joyce has long defined herself and her self-worth in terms of mothering her three children. Central to that self-definition was the importance of being needed, helping and comforting, especially in times of crisis. Increasingly, however, her teenage children no longer need nor want their mother around, at least not in the same way as before. Now the distancing is psychological, but soon they will literally distance themselves as they leave the home environment.⁸² The physiological parallel to this process in Joyce is menopause which she began last year. With menopause, Joyce will literally lose her ability to bear children. She will no longer be able to define her

⁸²Some authors distinguish between two phases of the mid-years passage. Mid-years I is while the children are teenagers. Mid-years II is the "empty-nest period after the children have left home." See Clinebell, p. 2.

self-worth and her role exclusively in terms of motherhood.

In order for Joyce to grow developmentally, she must be willing to "let go" of her emotional investment in the role of mother, and formulate a new relationship and set of roles with her children. Erikson describes the major need of the mid-life person as a need for generativity, defined as "to guide and care for the next generation."⁸³ This task is not limited to the raising and nurturing of one's children. Joyce must broaden her generative interests beyond her children and family, to include a community, civic and world vision, possibly expressed in a new career. Robert Peck says that one of the developmental issues in the mid-life crisis is "cathectic flexibility vs. cathectic impoverishment."⁸⁴ The mid-life person who successfully grows through this period has an emotional flexibility or "a capacity to shift emotional investments from one person to another and from one activity to another."⁸⁵ This capacity is especially needed at the first loss of a primary relationship, like one's children. Joyce will need to learn to "let go" to her emotional investment in motherhood and reinvest that energy and "care" in other relationships and activities.⁸⁶

⁸³Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 267.

⁸⁴The complete list includes: valuing wisdom vs. valuing physical powers, socializing vs. sexualizing human relationships; cathectic flexibility vs. cathectic impoverishment, mental flexibility vs. mental rigidity. See Peck, pp. 46ff.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 46.

⁸⁶Erikson suggests that one cannot successfully resolve the crisis of generativity until one has resolved the intimacy vs. isolation crisis. This would imply that without an intimate marital relationship, Joyce's generativity task will be more difficult.

In order for Joyce to adjust to this loss of her children and her importance in their life as mother, she will need to do some painful "grief work." Some of that grieving process has already begun in this interview.

The following excerpt is taken from an interview that occurred relatively late in our acquaintance. Again, it is from a private session with Joyce.

- J1: I've got a new idea. I don't know if you're going to like it.
 C1: What is it?
 J2: Well, this Christmas we're going to visit Mom and Dad as usual, right? Then after a few days there, I'm going to stay on, while the kids come home.
 C2: John doesn't go at all?
 J3: Right, he never wants to go anywhere. He says he's got too much work to do at home. Anyhow, I'm going down to Tucson, to stay with some friends for another month or so. It'll be a nice break for me, and I'm going to put my name in at a couple of [school] districts for jobs.
 C3: What does this mean? It is a separation, a vacation or what?
 J4: Well, I guess it's a little of both . . . kind of a trial separation for John and I. I want to see how it feels, whether I can make it on my own or not.
 C4: You're not sure.
 J5: I'm 48 years old, you know. I'm not getting any younger. I haven't taught school for years, since before Jill's birth, some 20 years ago. Teaching has changed a lot since then; I may not even be qualified to teach any more.
 C5: You're wondering if you can hold a job . . . especially if you leave John.
 J6: Yes.
 C6: How does John feel about this?
 J7: Well, he doesn't want me to do it, but he admits things are not getting better between us right now. . . .
 C7: . . . and . . .
 J8: And I don't think they're going to get any better. His drinking seems worse to me. I've tried and tried to tell him to get some help (digression on drinking).
 C8: Tell me more about your feelings behind this idea.
 J9: Well, I guess I've been thinking about it for some time. I'm not getting any younger. I feel like my whole life is wasting away . . . trapped in this marriage . . . in this town. I hate Southern California. I have always been a desert gal. I love that country near Tucson . . . the mountains . . . the clean, crisp air.

- C9: You seem in a hurry.
 J10: No, not in all that much of a hurry, just anxious to get on with my life. I don't know where I'm going or what I'm going to do, but I want to get on with it.
 C10: Are you running to something or from something?
 J11: Both! I want more to life, more than this! I want to get away from this. I don't want to wake up some morning, old and grey and look back on my life and think, "What a waste!" I had so much potential, but I drown in my own crap.
 C11: Time is short all of a sudden.
 J12: Yeah, time is all I got left . . . time is everything. I don't want to waste it.
 C12: Better said, "I don't want to waste any more of it."
 J13: Yes, I have wasted a lot of it already . . . (continues on to discussion of present difficulties).

In this excerpt Joyce first articulates her sense that "time is running out."⁸⁷ She is aware of getting older and with that increasing age, "a contracting future." She wants to make a change now while she still can and while there is still time. Her sense of the limitedness of time is compounded by her sense of being trapped in an unhappy marriage that does not appear to be getting better. She feels like she is "wasting time" and time is now too valuable to waste. Joyce illustrates a subtle and yet important shift in time perspective that occurs in many middle age people. During this period many middle aged people shift from measuring their age "from the distance from (their) birth and start to measure it by the distance from (their) death."⁸⁸ They feel a subtle transition from "the end of growing up and the beginning of growing old." Such a shift in time perspective forces Joyce to

⁸⁷The feeling that time is running out is not limited to old age. See L. K. Frank, "Time Perspective," Journal of Social Philosophy, IV (1939), 293-312.

⁸⁸Jacqueline L. Rosen and Bernice L. Neugarten, "Ego Function in the Middle and Late Years," Journal of Gerontology, XX, 1 (1960), 22.

anticipate the Eriksonian eighth stage: "ego integrity vs. despair."⁸⁹ Imagining herself approaching the end of her life (lines J11), she searches for the meaning of life by evaluating how she spent her remaining years. Anticipating the ultimate loss of life itself frequently initiates such a quest for meaning.⁹⁰

In this excerpt Joyce also contemplates ending the marriage and embarking upon a new life-course. Her trial separation will also be a trial new life, "to see if I can make it on my own." In so doing she anticipates the loss of her marriage and family-oriented life of the last twenty years. In some sense, especially with the marriage, the loss has already occurred. In so doing she is also redefining her identity--away from an identity defined in terms of motherhood and marriage and toward an identity defined in terms of career. In this way Joyce is "reliving" her identity crisis during "a second adolescence" or what Anne Simon calls a "middlescence."⁹¹ In planning her possible new life, Joyce is also illustrating a shift in psycho-sexual inclinations and stereotypes. Developing the "other half" of one's personality, in Jungian terms the anima and animus,⁹² is another important shift in one's life cycle that occurs at the midpoint.⁹³ Obviously,

⁸⁹See Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 266ff.

⁹⁰See Chapter one, "Grief Symptomatology" of this dissertation.

⁹¹Anne W. Simon, The New Years (New York: Knopf, 1968), p. 19.

⁹²See C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1933), pp. 95ff.

⁹³See also David L. Gutmann, "An Exploration of Ego Configurations," in Neugarten, Middle Age and Aging, pp. 444-52.

there are many psychological forces that contribute to Joyce's desire to alter radically her life-course and some of these forces involve real or anticipated losses. This "change of life," like all life-changes, will involve both a sense of gain and a sense of loss.

It is clear from this detailed examination of one developmental phase that loss and grief play a central role in the midlife passage of Joyce and John Robertson. These excerpts have illustrated the losses of one's parents (both the roles and the person), of one's children and of one's role as parent, of health, vitality and career hopes, as well as the anticipated loss of one's life. Coupled with these "normal" developmental losses, the Robertsons must cope with the gradual loss of their marriage as well. In each of these cases, developmental growth will involve a withdrawing of emotional investment in the lost objects (i.e., grief), and a reinvestment of that energy in new relationships, identities and activities.

E. GRIEF AND DEVELOPMENTAL GROWTH

In the last two sections it has been argued that emotional loss is an inevitable and pervasive factor in the human life cycle. It is clear from that discussion that loss is not only inevitable, but at times necessary for developmental health. At an appropriate time a young infant must lose his/her mother's breast in order to grow developmentally into greater autonomy. An infant that was not allowed to "lose" in this way and reached an age of six or seven still attached to his/her mother, would be classified as emotionally retarded or disturbed. Similarly, a young adult must lose his/her childhood attachments

in order to grow into the roles and responsibilities of adulthood. Again, if that young person reached an age of 30-35 years still attached to his/her childhood roles, he/she would be classified as psychologically ill. Life begins with one separation after another, writes Arthur Freese, "there is no developmental growth without separation, loss . . . where parents prevent separation pathology develops."⁹⁴ In the second half of life a middle aged couple must lose their children and their role as parents in order to grow into a new and richer relationship with each other and their children. An elderly citizen must lose his/her attachment to a job in order to begin to realize fully the possibilities of a retired life. In these ways loss is necessary for developmental health.⁹⁵

Since psychology's birth as a science less than 100 years ago, psychological literature has offered a wide range of definitions of emotional or psychological health. The psychoanalytic tradition has offered such interesting definitions of health as Sigmund Freud's "to love and to work"⁹⁶ or Karen Horney's "wholeheartedness and spontaneity of feelings."⁹⁷ Behavioral psychology has sought to define health in

⁹⁴Arthur Freese, Help for Your Grief (New York: Schocken, 1977)

⁹⁵This view stands in pointed contrast to accidental losses, discussed in broader terms in chapter two. An accidental loss is initially experienced not as necessary to health, but as a disruption of it. Only later in retrospect do some individuals cite ways in which they are healthier as a consequent of the loss.

⁹⁶Sigmund Freud, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (New York: Basic, 1961), XXI, 59ff.

⁹⁷Karen Horney, Our Inner Conflicts (New York: Norton, 1945), pp. 242-43.

measurable behavioristic terms,⁹⁸ while the Humanistic psychologist prefers concepts as "wholeness"⁹⁹ or "to be that self one truly is."¹⁰⁰ Life-span psychology offers a unique perspective and insight into the nature of health. From its point of view, it is not possible to speak of a single static concept of health. Health is different for each stage of the life cycle. What is healthy behavior or psychodynamics in the adolescent would appear pathological in the middle-aged adult and vice versa. Similarly, what is psychologically healthy in the five-year-old child would not appear so in the adolescent. Health must be defined developmentally in terms of the life-stage of the individual.¹⁰¹ The healthiest person would be a person who is fully living his/her current life-stage, including all of the crises and conflicts appropriate for that life-stage.¹⁰² Another way of defining health developmentally is to take a "motion picture instead of a still-picture," that is, define health as the ability to successfully move through the life-cycle successively encountering and resolving the conflicts and tasks of each life stage. Health is then understood as a process and not as a static entity.

⁹⁸See Aubrey J. Yates, Behavior Therapy (New York: Wiley, 1970).

⁹⁹Frederick S. Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim (Moab, UT: Real People Press, 1969), p. 67.

¹⁰⁰Carl R. Rogers, On Becoming a Person (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 183.

¹⁰¹Health must also be defined culturally. What is classified in one culture as healthy may be "abnormal" to the next.

¹⁰²Life-span assumes that crisis and conflict are normal, in fact, a necessary part of the life-cycle.

This view of psychological health corresponds with the definition of health proposed in the initial chapter of this dissertation. There, it was proposed that one of the chief characteristics of health is that it is "reality-oriented." Developmentally, this means that the truly healthy person accepts and lives in the present reality of his/her current life-stage. Such a person's emotional life is completely "up-to-date." He/she does not live as if he/she is still much younger (or much older). The healthy person's emotional life accurately corresponds to the current life-stage reality.¹⁰³ Everett L. Shostrom has described the results of his "Personal Orientation Inventory" which measures the dominant time frame of individuals. On the basis of his study, he proposed that "the healthy individual is one who lives primarily in the present"¹⁰⁴ as opposed to the "pathologically past-oriented or the "pathologically future-oriented individual." He is worth quoting:

The self-actualizing person appears to live more fully in the here-and-now. He is able to tie the past and the future to the present in meaningful continuity. He appears to be less burdened by guilts, regrets, and resentments from the past . . . and his aspirations are tied meaningfully to the present working goals. . . . The pathologically past-oriented individual is characterized by guilt, regret and the undigested memories of the past. He is the depressive who keeps remembering past hurts.¹⁰⁵

Shostrom's definition of health fits well into a development context.

¹⁰³In this sense, Rogers' description of health as congruence would also fit. See Rogers, On Becoming a Person, pp. 61ff.

¹⁰⁴Everett L. Shostrom, "Time as an Integrating Factor," in Böhler, p. 358.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 352.

The healthy person is the one whose emotional life is fully in the here-and-now, engaged in and corresponding to the person's current life-stage. In this sense the healthy person is reality-oriented.

The difficulty in being psychologically healthy, keeping one's emotional life fully in the present reality--is that the present reality is always changing. As noted, change is continuously and pervasively occurring throughout one's entire life cycle. Included in that change are continuous and sometimes traumatic losses. In order for a person to be healthy, he/she continuously or at least periodically must adjust his/her emotional life to a new reality. The emotional mechanism for this periodical adjustment is grief. Periodically, one grieves what has been lost by recent life-cycle changes, thus bringing that person's emotional energy "up to date" and available for investments in the present life-stage. Speaking of these periodical adjustments, "It is as though," writes Sidney Levin, "that one had used a form of deficit financing for many years and was suddenly asked to make up the accumulated debt."¹⁰⁶ Actually from a purely health point of view it would be preferable if there was as little accumulated debt as possible, that is, for the grief process to be as continuous as possible. Most people, however, are only dimly aware of developmental losses until they are focused in some symbolic transition event. To repeat then, in order to be fully healthy in a developmental sense, one must at least periodically bring one's emotional life "up to date" by

¹⁰⁶Sidney Levin, "Depression in the Aged," in Berezin and Cath, p. 215.

grieving what has been lost in recent life-cycle changes. In this sense the grief process is an essential ingredient in the maintenance of health.

This understanding of grief, as a mechanism for the maintenance of developmental health corresponds to Colin M. Parkes' view of grief as described in chapter two. There grief was described as a gradual "process of realization"--a gradual "making real the fact of the loss."¹⁰⁷ Upon the traumatic loss of a loved one, the psyche initially recoils in disbelief. In severe cases the reality of the loss can even be denied altogether. Gradually the psyche "allows" the painful reality of the loss to be fully emotionally realized. This process, according to Parkes, occurs in a cyclic dynamic, alternating between periods of pain ("pangs") and mitigation. A person's grief work is said to be finished when the reality of the loss is fully emotionally accepted and adjusted to.

What is true of accidental losses is now understood as equally true of developmental losses. With every life-cycle change, significant losses occur. In most cases these losses are so subtle and continuous that the reality of the loss is not fully realized except at symbolic transitional events. At such times a person's emotional life must be re-adjusted to the new revised reality by grieving the loss of those "loved objects" (or attachments) which were lost through recent life-cycle changes. Until this emotional re-adjustment is completed,

¹⁰⁷See Colin Murray Parkes, Bereavement (New York: International Universities Press, 1972), p. 183.

a person is not emotionally free to invest him/herself in the tasks, conflicts and issues of the next life-stage. An incomplete grief process could permanently block further developmental growth by fixating the person's psychic life upon past attachments. In short, grief is a necessary part of developmental growth. Upon each developmental transition one must grieve what has been lost in order to grow developmentally into the next life-stage.

Life cycle theorists offer several refinements to this general conclusion that grief is a necessary part of developmental growth. The developmental transition is conceived by most life-cycle theorists as a developmental crisis, in the sense of a "turning point."¹⁰⁸ Each life-stage presents certain developmental tasks. Their relative positive resolution facilitates an individual's transition into the next life-stage; while their relative negative resolution diverts the individual from a normal sequential development into a sub-normal and possibly pathological pattern. Erikson has described these "tasks" in terms of a psycho-sexual conflict between two forces, the positive resolution of which strengthens the ego through the mastery of particular virtues.¹⁰⁹ Robert Havighurst has described these developmental tasks in more specifically sociological ways, reflecting the inevitable changes of roles with each transition.¹¹⁰ In each case, one cannot grow developmentally, that is, move on to the tasks of the next life-stage, until

¹⁰⁸See Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle," p. 50ff.

¹⁰⁹See Erikson, Childhood and Society.

¹¹⁰See Havighurst.

one has successfully completed the tasks of the present stage. This is so because the successful resolution of each stage's tasks serves as a foundation for the conflictual crisis of the next stage. Even if one grows chronologically, one's psycho-social growth will be blocked until the tasks of the earlier life-stage have been completed.

This analysis of the life-cycle transitional dynamics seems contrary to that analysis previously described in terms of grief dynamics. The imagery of "completing a developmental task" does not easily fit with the grief imagery of "letting go of emotional attachments." Yet there is some overlap. It is a helpful refinement, for example, to realize that it is not possible to "let go" of a life-stage until one has completed that life-stage's tasks. In this sense the life-cycle theorists have described mechanics of how one "lets go" of past attachments. One is able to "let go" to the extent that he/she has completed those essential developmental tasks.

It is interesting to note that while these two sets of images have contradictory elements, they both share the common assumption that one must finish with the past before one is able to deal fully with the next life-stage. This would confirm the general principle that finishing the past is a necessary prerequisite to welcoming the future (or living fully in the present). In short, developmental growth requires the emotional letting go of the past prior to any real engagement in the present or transition into the future.

Another refinement to this discussion of the life-cycle transition dynamics from the perspective of life-span psychology is the timing of transitions. The transition from one life-stage to the next

is not always a clearly definable sequential progression.¹¹¹ Most people particularly in the second half of life resist developmental changes. Thus their emotional life is often "behind" their developmental life and periodically they just grieve the losses that can no longer be ignored. Ideally, however, the developmentally healthy person is continuously grieving, so much so, that it is hardly recognized as grief. A young child, for example, gradually relinquishes his/her attachments to "objects" of an earlier period and simultaneously replaces them with new attachments appropriate to his/her new life-stage. So simultaneous is this process that letting go of the past and welcoming the future are in actuality the same process. Such a gradual process might best be described as a continuous process of displacing, rather than as attachment-loss-attachment sequence.¹¹²

In the terminology of grief studies this kind of gradual or continuous process is best described as anticipatory grief. A developmentally healthy person is continuously anticipating the loss of various attachments throughout his/her life cycle. Thus, such a person is continuously "letting go" of valued objects gradually, and simultaneously gradually forming new attachments. In fact a general principle could

¹¹¹Erikson argues that every developmental crisis relives past crises and foreshadows future crises as well. See Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis.

¹¹²This analysis of grief's role in developmental growth is a helpful refinement of our understanding of the grief process as described in the last chapter. Grief is not just the process of letting go of past attachments, but it is also the process of forming new attachments. They are in fact the same process. The grief process is powered by both a push from the past and a pull toward the future. The pull of the future is usually more keenly felt by the person experiencing a developmental loss than an accidental loss. Nevertheless it is always present.

be formulated that the more that life-cycle grief is anticipatory in nature, the more emotionally "ready" a person is when the next stage arrives, and thus the more developmentally healthy that person is. Unlike accidental losses, developmental losses can be and usually are vaguely anticipated. The more that developmental losses are fully emotionally anticipated, the more gradual and continuous will be the grief process. In short, the more anticipatory the grief, the greater the potential for developmental health.

While there have been several refinements and qualifications to this discussion, it is apparent that loss is a necessary part of developmental growth. Therefore, in order for a person to maintain psychological health, he/she must periodically grieve the loss of certain attachments lost in recent life-cycle changes. Thus, grief is a necessary part of developmental growth as well. The successful resolution of the grief process is a prerequisite to growing developmentally into the next life-stage.

The question now arises again regarding those variables that facilitate this necessary periodical grieving and growing. This discussion now turns to the role of the four variables--community, ritual, meaning-system and faith--in facilitating the grief process initiated by life-cycle losses.

Transitional Communities

In chapter two the role of community in facilitating the grief process of those persons involved in accidental losses was discussed. It was noted that the presence and availability of an empathetic,

supportive community aided the bereaved in giving license to their grief emotions and thereby in facilitating their growth. It was also noted that this crucial role of community in the facilitation of grief was supported not only by clinical studies but by the theory regarding the nature of grief as well. For example, "separation anxiety," the irreducible element in all grief, is best mitigated by the close presence of other people. Further the very visible and vocal expressions of grief itself seems to be instinctual stimuli drawing other humans to the aid of the bereaved and weak. The critical importance of community toward the facilitation of grief seems well supported by both clinical data and theoretical formulations.

It would seem logical therefore that the role of community would be an equally crucial factor in facilitating the grief of those persons involved in developmental losses. Developmental losses, however, are usually not as traumatic and dramatic as accidental losses. Developmental losses are also more likely to be anticipated than accidental losses. Developmental losses are more gradual and subtle, often extending over an entire period of one's life rather than occurring suddenly at one precise moment. Thus the grief reactions in response to developmental losses are also more gradual, subtle and continuous. This makes the systematic research of this kind of grief more difficult and ambiguous. Nevertheless, if this analysis has been correct so far, the role of an empathetic, supportive community should be equally important in helping people grow through developmental losses as through accidental losses. Even though there is very little research in this area, this author believes that a strong case can be made to support

this conclusion.

The field of group dynamics is a relatively young science within the broader discipline of psychology. Within the last two decades there has been a surge of interest and participation in group work, including encounter groups, group therapy, sensitivity training, growth groups and so on. One aspect of this group movement was the "self-help" group, originally developed and modeled by Alcoholics Anonymous.¹¹³ In recent times the self-help philosophy has received additional theoretical foundation from the growth psychology of Abraham Maslow.¹¹⁴ "Growth groups," as they are now called, believe that people grow best in the context of a loving, supportive community of people. They endeavor to attract relatively well-functioning people who are working on the normal crises and problems of living. They believe that gathering people who are struggling with the same problem offers an opportunity for group members to support and guide each other. The group leader then ceases to be the resident expert upon whom the group is dependent, and starts being a facilitator of the group process. It is believed that this "growth group" format and philosophy facilitates more emotional growth, individual responsibility and genuine community than the more traditional approaches to group therapy.

¹¹³See Alcoholics Anonymous (New York: AA, 1955) or Twelve Steps and Twelve Transitions (New York: Harper & Row, 1952) for a description of the original format of A.A. Other self-help groups that use the A.A. model include Al-Anon, Gamblers Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

¹¹⁴See Abraham H. Maslow, The Psychology of Being (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1962).

One approach to developing a network of growth group opportunities in any community agency or church is through a life-cycle scheme. Howard J. Clinebell, Jr. has proposed such a scheme based upon Erik Erikson's eight developmental stages.¹¹⁵ Examples of such groups include: Identity formation groups for youth, Generativity groups, Newlyweds growth groups (to build intimacy), Creative Retirement groups and New-Parent groups.¹¹⁶ In recent years this author and his spouse have had an opportunity to participate in two such life-stage oriented groups. In a Lamaze Childbirth class group members both practiced the techniques of natural childbirth and, more importantly, provided mutual support, encouragement and hope as they shared together this significant transition in their life cycle. Similarly, in a couples' growth group, they discovered that every member there was struggling with some aspect of a marital-personal-vocational crisis that develops in and around age thirty. Again, they found the mutual support, identification and empathy very helpful in assisting them through this period.

The primary task of a life-stage growth group is to facilitate the developmental growth of its members through that particular life crisis. This task is facilitated in several ways. First, by being in a common group people who are going through the same life-stage are

¹¹⁵Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., The People Dynamic (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 138.

¹¹⁶The growth group's target groups can be either the individual going through a life cycle transition and/or the significant others to that individual. For example, a young infant is best aided in his/her transition through a growth group for the parents. Every significant life transition for one individual inevitably involves his/her family members in transitions as well.

able to identify common issues, conflicts and crises. They are thus better able to understand their particular life-stage crisis. Secondly, group members who have partially resolved their crisis are better able to assist those who are just beginning or who are "stuck" developmentally. They do this by offering suggestions, serving as models and most importantly, providing hope. Thirdly, and most importantly for our purposes, growth groups provide a context of empathetic, supportive community. Clinebell writes:

To continue growing, every person requires a depth relationship with at least one other human being. A small network of depth relationships is even better.¹¹⁷

Every developmental transition will involve a loss, experienced in relative degrees of intensity. All loss, whether grieved openly or quietly, involves psychic pain. A caring community provides the human support and comfort in which people can face their pain and express it openly. To the extent that pain is so faced and expressed, a person's grief process is facilitated and developmental growth is made possible.

Growth groups, built around a life-cycle scheme, are inherently transitional in nature. They are formed in order to meet a particular life-cycle crisis which is normally a temporary crisis. Once that crisis is resolved the need for the group theoretically disappears. This idea fits with the growth group philosophy which prefers groups that "self-destruct" after a specific termination date.¹¹⁸ If the life of a group is to be extended beyond that termination, a new contract

¹¹⁷Clinebell, People Dynamics, p. 8.

¹¹⁸Ibid., see p. 19.

based on a new need would have to be developed.¹¹⁹ Consequently, these communities are transitional by design. They are transitional both in the sense of being "temporary" and also in the sense of aiding the life-cycle "transitions" of its members.

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations has established a unit for the study of Psycho-Social Transitions, headed by Colin Murray Parkes, the eminent thanatologist.¹²⁰ His background with grief and bereavement offers a unique perspective on psycho-social transitions.¹²¹ After several studies¹²² of psycho-social transitions like unemployment, imprisonment, demotion, retirement and migration, Parkes concludes "that people who have successfully come through major transitions in their lives are often best able to help other individuals who are still caught up in the process of realization."¹²³ He advocates the development of "transitional communities" to assist people who are entering significant psycho-social transitions. According to Parkes these communities would be ongoing continuously adding new members who are about to enter the given transition and discharging members who are significantly settled in their new state. Preliminary efforts have applied

¹¹⁹Theoretically according to this scheme, if a new contract was not developed and a group endeavored to meet indefinitely, as some want to do, it could block further developmental growth by preventing keeping people focused on some life crisis when they need to move on.

¹²⁰Unit for the Study of Psycho-Social Transitions, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, Tavistock Centre, 120 Belsize Lane, London, N.W. 3.

¹²¹Parkes' concept of psycho-social transitions includes, but is not limited to life-cycle transitions.

¹²²See the bibliography in Parkes, "Psycho-Social Transitions," pp. 101-15.

¹²³Ibid., p. 112.

✓ this concept to hospitals, most notably in England's St. Christopher's Hospice for the terminally ill. Both during the patient's terminal phases and during the family's bereavement following the patient's death, both patient and family are involved in an on-going group experience made up of patients and families going through a similar transition.¹²⁴ This supportive community enables individuals to deal openly and effectively with their grief feelings. In the United States the concept of transitional communities has been applied to the resettlement of Prisoners of War after World War II¹²⁵ and the growing use of "half-way houses" for ex-convicts and mentally retarded or ill people. These transitional communities serve to facilitate the transition of people from regimented institutional care to self-care in society. They do this by providing a context of support and empathy which aides the individual in making the necessary emotional transition.

Another body of data that supports the role of community in psycho-social transitions comes from the anthropological literature on rituals and rites of passage (which will be discussed thoroughly later). Building on van Gennep's tri-part analysis of a rite of passage,¹²⁶

¹²⁴Cicely Saunders has written only scattered articles and lectures on St. Christopher's work. Besides these articles, most of my information comes from a personal conversation with Hendrik P. Venter who studied there and his dissertation, "Pastoral Care of the Terminally Ill Patient and the Family," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1975)

¹²⁵Adam Curle, "Transitional Communities and Social Reconnection, part i," Human Relations, I, 1 (June 1947), 42-68; and Adam Curle and E. L. Trist, "Transitional Communities and Social Reconnection," Part II, Human Relations, I, 2 (November 1947), 240-89.

¹²⁶Arnold van Gennep, Rites of Passage (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1960), first published in 1909 as Les Rites de passage.

Victor W. Turner has suggested that "communitas" emerges only during the liminal or transitional phase of a ritual.¹²⁷ Communitas, according to Turner, is society unstructured, that is, people relating to one another without roles and status, as a "communion of equals." This kind of pure community is "essentially a phenomena of transition,"¹²⁸ occurring in times of personal, community or cultural transition. In the time between the transition from one set of roles/status to another set, there are liminal periods when neither set of roles/status are operative and communitas emerges. "In rites of passage," he writes, "men are released from structure into communitas only to return to structure revitalized by their experience of communitas."¹²⁹ Turner has in mind a more social and even global analysis of the dialectic between structure and communitas than the single individual life-cycle.¹³⁰ Nevertheless his insights apply equally to the single person or family unity. In times of transition, as in a life-cycle transition, there are liminal moments in which the normal hierarchy of social roles is temporarily suspended and true community is possible. This author would add that at such times, community is not just possible but essential to developmental growth. Community is essential in part because

¹²⁷Victor W. Turner, The Ritual Process (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 112.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 129.

¹³⁰He suggests that when whole societies are in periods of rapid social change radical communitas is more likely to emerge. He applies his analysis to such diverse social movements as Franciscan monks, Shajiya movement in Bengal, apocalyptic sectarian communities, and the Hippies of modern America.

its support and empathy facilitate the individual's grief process, allowing them to "let go" of recent developmental losses and grow into a new life-stage.

Rites of Passage

In general ritual is a formalized, customed and symbolic behavior. It is by definition repetitive with a recognizable form or script. It is always social behavior, but not necessarily always done in a group. The participants are usually conscious of their activity as being ritual. This section will focus on a particular kind of ritual: the life crisis ritual or the rite of passage. The term "rite of passage" was first coined by French anthropologist, Arnold van Gennep in 1909 ("Les rites de passage"). It grew out of his studies of "semi-civilized" peoples and societies. He noted that the life of an individual in any society is "a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another."¹³¹ Each life cycle transition, whether childbirth, career advancement or death is marked by a well-defined ritual, which he termed a rite of passage. He writes:

Transitions from group to group and from one social situation to the next are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence, so that a man's life comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and beginnings: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialization, and death. For every one of these events there are ceremonies whose essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined.¹³²

Van Gennep noted that these rites of passage were generally quite

¹³¹Gennep, p. 2.

¹³²Ibid., p. 3.

similar not only in a given society, but even across societal lines. These rites seemed to be a society's way of recognizing and facilitating¹³³ the transition of an individual from one status/role to another.¹³⁴ Furthermore, these rites of passage inevitably involved religious symbols and myths, because "to the semi-civilized mind no act is entirely free of the sacred."¹³⁵ Rites of passage, like all rituals, carry a symbolic power expressed in its myths, history and very repetition.

Having identified a common ritual form, the rite of passage, van Gennep sought to analyze its structure, hoping to gain perspective on how it functions to facilitate an individual from one life-stage to another. He took his clue from a detailed analysis of the territorial passage: the transition from one country to another or from one province to another. The ceremonies surrounding a territorial passage seemed to be easily classified into three successive stages: separation rituals, transition rituals and entering rituals. Van Gennep found that this same tri-part structure was operative in all rites of passage. He concluded that there were three phases to all rites of passage: separation, transition and reincorporation. While there were

¹³³There is considerable debate among theorists whether the purpose of ritual is one of communication or action. This author holds the viewpoint that both purposes, "recognizing and facilitating" are valid.

¹³⁴This general purpose--to facilitate a transition--does not eliminate particular individual purposes of each ritual, as fertility rituals' purpose is to increase an individual's fertility as well as being a part of the betrothal-marriage rite of passage.

¹³⁵Gennep, p. 3.

various individual rituals associated with each phase, the overall pattern remained consistent through all of the common life crises.

From an analysis of several common life-cycle transitions, the tri-part formulation was easily apparent. For example, van Gennep understood the betrothal and marriage process as a unified pattern of separation, transition and reincorporation. The beginning of betrothal was marked by separation rites involving leaving the parents' home and/or leaving one's own sex group. The betrothal itself was a kind of transition or neutral period, concluded by the wedding which was a rite of incorporation into a new life. Van Gennep carefully noted that this process was as much a life-cycle transition for the next of kin as it was for the bride and groom. Similarly, pregnancy and childbirth together constituted an extended rite of passage. He writes:

The ceremonies of pregnancy and childbirth together generally constitute a whole. Often the first rites performed separate the pregnant woman from society, from her family group, and sometimes even from her sex. They are followed by rites pertaining to pregnancy itself, which is a transitional period. Finally comes the rites of childbirth intended to reintegrate the woman into the society as a mother, especially if she has given birth to her first child or to a son.¹³⁶

Also a funeral which might at first glance appear to be just a rite of separation, actually included rites of transition and reincorporation when taken together with mourning rites and customs. Especially for the immediate next of kin, the death of a parent can mark a significant life-cycle transition from child to parent, from heir to head of the family, etc. Rites of separation include the funeral-burying process

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 41.

plus the many customs and rites surrounding it. The mourning period is best understood as a transitional period during which all normal societal functioning ceases. Reincorporation rites which mark the end of the mourning period include such things as the removal of black clothing, the return to normal (or new) duties, the erection of a monument, etc.¹³⁷ In each of these three examples, as in all rites of passage, there were always three parts: separation, transition and reincorporation, and they were always in the same successive order.

For the purposes of this dissertation, van Gennep's analysis has several relevant insights. First, in every life-cycle transition there is some element of separation. Every transition involves something that is loss or something from which one is separated. This observation agrees with the thesis, noted in earlier sections, that loss is presence in all life-cycle transitions. Secondly, there is a successive order to the three phases of a rite of passage. This would suggest some agreement with the principle posited earlier that one must "let go" of the past life-stage before he/she can "move on" into the next life-stage. In other words grief is a necessary part of developmental growth and without a positive resolution of the grief process one is not able to pass onto the next life-stage. Thirdly, it was van Gennep's belief that these rites of passage facilitated the individual's transition from one life-stage to another. This belief would suggest

¹³⁷A parallel reincorporation phase is symbolically expressed in the myths of the deceased's "journey to the afterlife," a common theme in many cultures. Often the deceased's full entry into the after-life is not complete until the end of the survivors' mourning period.

that rituals can be an important variable in the facilitation of the grief-growth process. Apparently, the tri-part structure itself actually encourages this facilitation by first focusing on individual's separating, then on a transitional rest period, and thirdly on the incorporating process into a new life-stage. In this way the ritual process gradually "leads" an individual through his/her life-cycle transition.

If rituals do in fact facilitate the transition of an individual from one life-stage to another, it is not yet clear precisely how they accomplish this task. This author could suggest that there are several dimensions along which rituals function. First and foremost, there is the emotional dimension of the grief itself. Rituals can function to facilitate a person's grief process and thereby his/her developmental transition. They do this by encouraging the release of emotions; and the release of emotions, as noted in earlier discussions, facilitates the grief process. Rituals provide a safe, structured context in which it is permissible and even expected to express emotions. This gives a person an opportunity to fulfill his/her inner need to release emotions at a time of crisis. This "releasing" can of course take a variety of forms from a mere "talking it out" to weeping and wailing. In many cases however rituals also serve as the vehicles of societal expectation and pressure upon the individual. Severe group pressure to emote can actually block an authentic release of emotions. The foremost spokesperson for this point of view was Emile Durkheim, who wrote:

Mourning is not a natural movement of private feelings wounded

by a cruel loss; it is a duty imposed by the group. One weeps, not simply because he is sad, but because he is forced to weep.¹³⁸

It is the opinion of this author that every ritualistic expression of emotion is a mixture of inner need and outer expectation. While an emotional release prompted completely by group expectation borders on entertainment, it is nevertheless an emotional release and emotional release does facilitate grief. Sometimes a person who begins an emotional expression primarily out of group expectation might then (in the process of releasing) discover his/her own inner need and continue to release for authentic reasons.

Rituals also help facilitate the grief process by establishing a structure that serves as an emotional guide and set of boundaries for the individual. For example, the rites and regulations of a formalized mourning period can almost "carry" the individual through the grief process. Tendencies to avoid or repress grief can be corrected by such rites as "the viewing of the body" and hand-lowering the deceased into the grave which force the bereaved to face the reality of his/her loss. Tendencies to stop grieving too soon or get stuck at one stage of the grief process can be corrected by a discipline of daily prayers or similar rituals that force the bereaved to continue to face his/her pain regularly and stay "in process." Likewise, a tendency to continue mourning too long can be corrected by the gradual de-regulation of life in each successive mourning phase and the eventual termination of the

¹³⁸Emile Durkheim, "Particular Rites and the Ambiguity of the Notion of Sacredness," in Louis Schneider (ed.) Religion, Culture, Society (New York: Wiley, 1964), pp. 91ff.

formalized mourning period altogether which allows a person to stop grieving without excessive guilt. In this sense the rites of passage would actually help achieve the transition of the participant through the life crisis as well as communicate the fact of its passage.

The rite of passage also helps facilitate the transition of an individual from one life-stage to another by providing a vehicle for the social recognition and communication of the transition. Rituals are after all social behaviors. They are the group's way of publicly acknowledging a change of status and role for an individual. Without this social communication, inner emotional growth no matter how successful would continuously be frustrated by old social role expectations. Rituals thereby help reduce intragroup conflict and foster bonds of unity and consensus.¹³⁹ Rites of passage are normally times when an extended family and significant others gather around the particular individual. Through participation in these rituals, the supporting community not only acknowledges the developmental transition of the individual, but reaffirms its own values, beliefs and unity. In this sense rites of passage help form and strengthen community (last section) and thereby also indirectly facilitate the individual's grief-growth process.

Rites of passage also help facilitate an individual's developmental transition from one life-stage to another by providing a meaning system (see next section). As noted earlier, every loss involves a spiritual or Meaning crisis in which the individual's meaning system is

¹³⁹See Aidan Kavanaugh, "Role of Ritual in Personal Development," in James D. Shaughnessy (ed.) Roots of Ritual (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973).

momentarily lapsed. Besides being an emotional and social process, rituals are also full of meanings expressed in myths, symbols and beliefs. In a time of a lapse of meaning, rituals help reaffirm a person's roots and identity. Rituals, especially those unique of a particular subgroup, and with a long history in that subgroup are a means of identity affirmation. Margaret Mead reflects on this point:

Rituals offer a way in which people express their tremendous dependence on this continuity for their sense of identity and their ability to draw on their own memories of those around them, and the faith of those around them. It is by drawing on such memories that a sense of identity, security and continuity is assured.¹⁴⁰

Rituals are also a way of acknowledging and assisting a change of meaning system for the individual who is changing his/her attachments. With each new life-stage, a person is introduced to new myths, stories and symbols that help that person understand him/herself in the new life-stage. For example, new parents are introduced to and appreciate anew a variety of stories, symbols and myths that they had previously ignored or been barred from. Often new parents are introduced to these stories by current parents, like learning the initiatory creed of a new club. In both ways then--affirming a continuity of identity and acknowledging a new identity--the context or meaning system of rituals facilitate an individual's developmental transition.

While a rite of passage can facilitate the passage of a person from one life-stage to another in the ways suggested above, the evidence is not always positive. A rite of passage is by definition a sociological process, while grieving is primarily a psychological process.

¹⁴⁰Margaret Mead, "Ritual and Social Crisis," in Shaughnessy, p. 95.

Normally these two processes serve each other. Rites and rituals are the vehicles or channels in which people can grieve. In return, rituals tell people how to grieve. The problem arises when the rituals and the grieving get out of line. In some cases rituals can become fixated by certain religious traditions and no longer successfully meet the developmental needs of an individual. The content of certain other rites, colored by theological extremism, can also actually block rather than facilitate a person's developmental growth. In still other cases society has changed so rapidly that the rituals are partial, dysfunctional and "out of sine."

This latter point is nowhere more evident than in the case of adolescence. Initiated in part by an expanding educational process, the modern extended period of adolescence has compounded the identity formation process of most young people.¹⁴¹ Similarly, the growing divorce and separation rate has introduced a new life-cycle transition that is rapidly becoming normative in many areas of the nation. In both cases, however the ritual-formation (and destruction) process has not yet caught up to these life cycle changes. The religious initiation rites (confirmation, baptism, etc.) used to serve as a rite of passage in an earlier age, but today they are (at best) partial. Today there is no single universally recognized ritual acknowledging and facilitating an adolescent's transition to adulthood. Similarly outside of legal requirement and customs, there is also no universally acknowledged divorce ritual. Religious institutions which often have been the source of rituals in the past have been particularly

¹⁴¹See Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis.

resistive to the development of divorce rituals often for what is perceived as good theological reasons. As a consequence individuals involved in these two new life cycle transitions are without the normal ritualistic structures of society that facilitate their developmental growth. Their transitions are therefore at the very least more painful than other transitions and at the worst, more prone to emotional developmental breakdowns. This situation is further compounded by the general decline of rituals and ritualistic observations in modern society which is increasingly secular and technological. The end result is that there are not only too few rituals associated with these new developmental transitions, but what rituals there are, are partial, dysfunctional and/or couched in ancient language and myths that no longer carry meaning.

It is the conclusion of this author that rites of passage can be an effective instrument to facilitate the transition of an individual from one life-stage to another. This is in part true because rituals can serve to facilitate a person's grief process. However, rituals are also a product of their particular cultural context. In periods of rapid social change or under the influence of the extremism of a particular subculture rituals can temporarily be dysfunctional, partial and antithetical to developmental growth. More attention needs to be paid to the precise character of rituals that facilitate or block growth.

Meaning-systems

In the last chapter the role of a meaning-system in facilitating

the grief process of persons experiencing severe accidental losses was discussed. It was noted that one's personal meaning-system seemed to be an important variable for coping with severe loss, but its precise relationship to an individual's grief process remained ambiguous. In some circumstances a person's meaning system functioned to discourage a full realization of the loss and a full expression of grief. In other circumstances it provided an individual with a sense of comfort, hope and security as he/she attempted to adjust to a radical new life situation. The key variables seemed to be the intensity with which one's beliefs are held, the precise content of those beliefs and the perceived finality or temporality of the loss.

It was also noted in the last chapter that every loss no matter how major or minor initiated a temporary "meaning crisis." This meaning crisis could be expressed in such symptoms as a hopelessness, a purposelessness or a doubt. Usually the process of rediscovering meaning in one's life paralleled the process of grieving. Full recovery from a loss was marked by both new emotional investments and a renewed sense of meaning. This latter point emerges in an analysis of the role of meaning-system in developmental losses as well.

Previously it has been suggested that with every life-cycle transition a person's pattern of emotional attachments changes. Some attachments associated with the past life-stage are given up; while new emotional attachments associated with the new life-stage are formed. One way of understanding grief is as a process of emotionally "detaching" oneself from lost "objects." Parkes, who has been one of the leading spokespersons for this point of view, suggests that individuals

value (or give meaning to) those objects (relationships, activities, things) to which they are emotionally attached.¹⁴² The more a person emotionally invests him/herself in an object, the more that he/she values that object and gives meaning to that object. According to Parkes, a person constructs his/her personal meaning-system out of the sum total of his/her emotional investments.¹⁴³ This same point concerning the interrelationship of meaning and emotional attachment was made by Viktor E. Frankl. Through his system of logotherapy, Frankl attempts to help people who suffer from "noogenic neurosis" (state of meaninglessness) to rediscover meaning in their lives.¹⁴⁴ One approach to such a rediscovery is through "creative values" by which he means making an emotional investment in some creative task of mission in life. Involvement in such a mission brings with it a sense of meaning and purpose. A slightly similar point was made by Abraham H. Maslow as well, when he noted that "self-actualized" persons were people with a mission which helped them fulfill their "meta-needs" for truth, purpose, justice and the like.¹⁴⁵

If a person builds his/her personal meaning-system around his/her particular constellation of emotional attachments; and if one's

¹⁴²Parkes, Bereavement, p. 9.

¹⁴³The term "meaning" as it is used here refers to a person's daily operating assumptions about life which may or may not be the same as those formalized beliefs to which he/she ascribes on Sunday mornings and holidays.

¹⁴⁴See Viktor E. Frankl: Doctor and the Soul (New York: Knopf, 1960).

¹⁴⁵Abraham H. Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 211.

emotional attachments change with each life-cycle transition, then a person's meaning-system would also inevitably change with each life-cycle transition. For example, an adolescent boy might find a great sense of meaning and purpose in playing football. Everything in his life "lives or dies" on each week's game. He adopts the philosophy, rituals and myths of the coach, the team, and the school. Yet, a few years later as an adult, he no longer finds much meaning in playing football. That previous meaning-system was dropped when he lost his attachment to playing football. As an adult his sense of purpose and values are now molded by his employment.¹⁴⁶ His beliefs and assumptions about the nature of the world, himself and other people are now colored by his career. Still later, however after retirement his meaning system will change again as his life will then no longer be consumed by a career. In short, a person's meaning-system changes with time in part because one's attachments change with time too.

This observation has been confirmed by several authors. Bühler has labeled this thirst for meaning "intentionality" which described the "phenomenon of people wanting to live for something."¹⁴⁷ She has documented that intentionality or the "drive toward self-fulfillment" changes shape and goals over the various stages of the life cycle. For example, the early adult years are characterized by a need for "creative expansion," whereas the latter adult years are characterized

¹⁴⁶A healthy person's meaning-system would not be completely molded by one particular aspect of his/her life. Such a case in the extreme would result in a form of compulsion. The healthy meaning-system is informed by many values and attachments, including a religious tradition.

¹⁴⁷Bühler, p. 21.

by a need to "uphold internal order."¹⁴⁸ Parkes has described the changing pattern of one's meaning-system over the life span as changes in one's "assumptive world."¹⁴⁹ A person's assumptive world is his/her set of assumptions about the nature of life, others and him/herself. According to Parkes, every psycho-social transition involves changes in one's assumptive world, in part because his/her emotional attachments have changed. In the realm of formalized religious meaning-systems, there is also evidence that one's meaning-system changes with each life-stage. LeRoy Aden of Lutheran Theological Seminary of Philadelphia has suggested that "faith" is "a developmental phenomenon."¹⁵⁰ "More specifically," he writes, "the dominant form that faith takes at any one time is determined in part by the particular developmental stage in which the individual is immersed."¹⁵¹ Using Erikson's eight-part scheme, he suggests that faith changes shape during the life cycle, from trust, to courage, to obedience, to identity and so on. There seems to be some evidence then that a person's meaning-system does change shape and even content with each life-stage. This author would suggest that this is in part due to the fact that a person's emotional attachments change with each life-stage and a person's meaning-system is tied to his/her constellation of emotional attachments.

Erikson has proposed another perspective on the role of meaning in the life cycle. He has argued that the meaning crisis is focused in

¹⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 93ff.

¹⁴⁹Parkes, "Psycho-Social Transitions," p. 110.

¹⁵⁰Aden, pp. 215-30.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 215.

one particular life-stage: the last one.¹⁵² As a person approaches death and the termination of his/her life, the conflict between ego integrity and despair emerges. Erikson describes ego integrity as "the acceptance of one's one and only life cycle as something that had to be and that by necessity, permitted no substitutions . . . and in such a final consolidation, death loses its sting."¹⁵³ The opposite, despair, arises when one realizes that one's life cycle was not meaningful and there is no time left to do otherwise, no time to repeat it over again. Kübler-Ross, who has worked so extensively with people who are living in this crisis, dramatically describes her awareness of this same point:

We could not convey to our colleagues that we are all dying--that we all have to face our finiteness long before we are terminally ill. This is perhaps the greatest lesson we learned from our patients: Live, so you do not have to look back and say, 'God, how I have wasted my life.'¹⁵⁴

Kübler-Ross goes on to suggest that through this crisis of meaning, initiated by the close proximity of death, a person can grow. Death can be, as the title of her recent book suggests, "the final stage of growth."

While the crisis of meaning reaches its zenith in the Eriksonian eighth stage, it is also present in every other life-stage as well. Erikson himself suggested that each developmental conflict is summed up (past conflicts) and previewed (future conflicts) in every other developmental crisis.¹⁵⁵ The crisis of integrity then must be previewed

¹⁵²See scheme of 8-stages in Erikson, Childhood and Society.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 268.

¹⁵⁴Kübler-Ross, p. xix.

¹⁵⁵Erikson, Identity, Youth, and Crisis, p. 91.

in all earlier crises. According to Erikson this is especially true for the "homo-religiosus." He writes of Luther:

This integrity crisis, last in the lives of ordinary men, is a life-long and chronic crisis in a homo religiosus. He is always older than his playmates or even his parents and teachers, and focuses in a precocious way on what it takes others a life-time to gain a mere inkling of: the question of how to escape corruption in living and how in death to give meaning to life.¹⁵⁶

The key variable appears to be an acute awareness of the shortness of time, usually initiated by an approaching or approximate death. An awareness of time, of course is not limited to the terminally ill. An unmarried person approaching age thirty or thirty-five could feel such an awareness of the shortness of time. Similarly a middle-aged person who is locked into a deadening and boring marriage or career could equally feel that time is too short. Persons who come close to death or lose someone they love in death also have an acute awareness of the brevity of time. In any case such an awareness whenever it occurs in the life cycle initiates a crisis of meaning and a radical re-evaluation of one's life. Authors like Frankl who lived through the horrors of World War II experienced a similar crisis of meaning that a near-death situation initiates.¹⁵⁷ Frankl came to build a whole system of psychotherapy around that experience. William H. Miller writing of recent Vietnam prisoners-of-war notes the same dynamic:

Prisoners will often spend thousands of hours contemplating what they have done with their lives and what they intend to do with

¹⁵⁶Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 261.

¹⁵⁷Viktor E. Frankl, From Death-Camp to Existentialism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).

them if they are lucky enough to survive their imprisonment. This kind of contemplation often results in a very positive philosophical change in a man's attitude, value system and philosophy of life. The value of remaining years increases with each lost.¹⁵⁸

In short, an awareness of the shortness of time, usually prompted by an awareness of death, initiates a renewed need for meaning in the individual. This need can spark a re-evaluation of one's life to date and a reprioritizing of one's values for the future.

In light of earlier discussions concerning the pervasive presence of loss in the life cycle, this author would suggest that every loss is also a reminder of the shortness of time and ultimately of death itself. "It is probably correct," writes Avery D. Weisman, "to surmise that behind each separate grief and painful separation is the image of death itself, our common fate and ultimate fact."¹⁵⁹ Therefore each loss, developmental or otherwise, initiates a crisis of meaning, a re-evaluation of one's life and its meaningfulness. It makes a person painfully aware that all of his/her attachments, however important they now seem, are in fact temporary. Ultimately and eventually everything will be lost. In this sense then every developmental loss is a preview of the ultimate loss of life itself and the crisis of meaning that its approach will initiate. Therefore how a person handles the "little" developmental losses of life sets the stage for how that person will handle the major losses. And also, how a person resolves

¹⁵⁸William H. Miller, "Dilemmas and Conflicts Specific to the Military Returned Prisoners of War," in Hamilton I. McCubbin, et al. (eds.) Family Separation and Reunion (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 124.

¹⁵⁹Avery D. Weisman, "Is Mourning Necessary?" in Schoenberg, p. 14.

these "little" crises of meaning throughout his/her life cycle will build a strong (or weak) meaning-system which will in turn prepare (or ill prepare) him/her to face the ultimate crisis of integrity at the last life-stage of his/her life cycle.

In conclusion there appears to be a strong interrelationship between loss and a person's need for meaning and meaning-system. With every life-cycle transition there is a loss however major or minor. This loss initiates a crisis of meaning. This is in part because a person's meaning system is built upon his/her constellation of emotional attachments and some of these attachments are now lost or significantly altered. Since a person attaches meaning to these emotional attachments, there is a momentary "lapse of meaning" until new attachments (and thereby new meanings) are formed. The fact that loss initiates a crisis of meaning is also in part because any loss is a reminder of the shortness of time in the face of which one's need for meaning becomes paramount. In this latter way every developmental loss and its initiated crisis of meaning, is a reminder of the ultimate loss of life itself and a preview of the eighth and final life-crisis.

While the interrelationship of developmental loss and a person's meaning-system is complex and fascinating, there has been little discussion of the relationship of meaning-system to grief and/or to developmental growth. This author can only conclude that every developmental loss initiates a meaning or existential crisis. It could be inferred from this limited conclusion that grief symptomology must include an existential dimension.¹⁶⁰ It could also be inferred that successful

¹⁶⁰As in fact it does. See chapter two, "Grief Symptomology" of this dissertation.

developmental growth must include an at least partially successful resolution of the meaning crisis. But it is impossible to determine if or how a person's meaning-system functions to facilitate grief and/or developmental growth. There is no data, either clinical or theoretical, that speaks to this question. To this point this inquiry must remain inconclusive.

Faith as "Basic Trust"

Among all of the life-cycle theorists, Erikson has written the most on the presence and role of trust in the human life cycle. He has argued that within the first year of life the human infant "experiences" a conflict between basic trust and basic mistrust.¹⁶¹ By "basic trust" Erikson means an attitude toward one's self and the world that "senses" them as basically trustworthy, that is, consistent, predictable and good. This condition never exists in the absolute however. The resolution of this nuclear conflict, like all succeeding conflicts, results in a ratio between basic trust and basic mistrust. According to Erikson indications of a relatively positive resolution are "an infant's ease of feeding, depth of sleep, the relaxation of his bowels," and his/her willingness to let the "mother out of sight without undue anxiety or rage."¹⁶² Furthermore through the relative positive development of basic trust, the infant's ego develops the first basic strength or virtue: hope. Hope is "the enduring belief in the attainability of

¹⁶¹See "Eith Ages of Man," in Erikson, Childhood, pp. 247ff.

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 247.

fervish wishes, in spite of the dark urges and rages which mark the beginning of existence."¹⁶³ A relatively negative resolution of this initial conflict between basic trust and basic mistrust leads to a corresponding degree of infantile schizophrenia or in other words "a basic turning away from life." In this way then basic trust is "the cornerstone of a healthy personality."¹⁶⁴ Without basic trust a young infant can literally physically and mentally die.

According to Erikson this "sense of" basic trust or mistrust is pre-cognitive. It represents an attitude or stance toward life itself, that is beyond and prior to any particular belief system although a meaning-system can contribute to its depth and regular renewal. Thus Erikson's description of the concept basic trust comes close to the definition of faith posited in this dissertation. In fact Erikson has suggested that the development of basic trust "becomes the capacity for faith."¹⁶⁵ For Erikson faith is the religious expression of basic trust. Similarly, hope which is the ego strength emerging out of a relatively positive resolution of this initial conflict is "the ontogenetic basis of faith."¹⁶⁶ Without this "basic" hope, any religious expressions and meanings of hope would not be possible. The formation of basic trust in the human psyche is also the initial development of faith in the sense used in this dissertation of a pre-cognitive

¹⁶³Erikson, Insight and Responsibility, p. 118.

¹⁶⁴Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle," p. 56.

¹⁶⁵Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis, p. 103.

¹⁶⁶Erikson, Insight and Responsibility, p. 118.

confidence in the trustworthiness of life. Later, adult meaning-systems will fill in the content of and the reasons for that faith.

Erikson has suggested that the institutional expression of basic trust is organized religion. He writes:

The parental faith which supports the trust emerging in the newborn, has throughout history sought its institutional safeguard . . . in organized religion. Trust born of care is, in fact, the touchstone of the actuality of a given religion. All religions have in common the periodical childlike surrender to a Provider or providers who dispense earthly fortune as well as spiritual health. . . .¹⁶⁷

Organized religion serves to strengthen and renew a person's basic trust through the mechanisms of creeds, rituals and values. Adult people need this periodic renewal of faith (or trust) for their own health and the health of their children. Erikson observes that "many who are proud to be without religion" are actually jeopardizing their children's capacity for developing basic trust, because an infant's basic trust finds its roots in the adult's faith.¹⁶⁸ "The one basic task of all religions," writes Erikson, "is to reaffirm that first relationship"¹⁶⁹ and thus strengthen the ego's capacity for basic trust.

Moving beyond the initial conflict between basic trust and basic mistrust, Erikson has suggested that basic trust continues to play a role in further developmental crises. He described, for example, the need for an organized religion to offer a ritual restoration of a sense of trust in the form of faith. He has also argued that with each

¹⁶⁷Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 250.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 251. See also Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle," p. 65.

¹⁶⁹Erikson, Young Man, Luther, p. 119.

crisis, the earlier crises are re-lived and the later crises are pre-viewed. Erikson has outlined in detail how this dynamic works in terms of the identity crisis that is prefigured in earlier crises and reviewed in later crises.¹⁷⁰ He did not, however, describe a similar detailed outline of how this dynamic works in terms of basic trust and each subsequent developmental crisis. Perhaps, the dynamics of loss and grief can offer some suggestions on how basic trust serves to facilitate developmental growth.

In previous sections it was argued that all life-cycle transitions involve developmental losses which are experienced in greater or lesser degrees depending on several factors. A person's constellation of emotional attachments inevitably changes with each developmental transition. Some valued persons, objects or ideas are not lost or significantly altered. In order to remain healthy one must grieve or let go of his/her attachment to those things. Other people, objects or ideas will take on new importance with the advent of a new life-stage. Each emotional attachment, however, represents security to the individual. They are the tools by which a person's personal sense of identity and safety is maintained. Every change in a person's attachments, however suddenly or gradually, represents insecurity. It is experienced as "risky" to let go of the old and familiar and attempt to move toward the new and unknown. Even though most of these transitions are gradual, there is a period of inbetween time when one has only partially let go of the old and only partially embraced the new. At this moment the

¹⁷⁰See Chapter 3 of Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis, pp. 91ff.

risk is most keenly experienced. This risk is two-fold. There is the risk of letting go of the old and secure and the risk of entering into the new and unknown. In another sense both of these risks reflect the same fear: the fear of change.

Otto Rank has suggested a similar dual-force understanding of each developmental change. He has argued that each developmental change has a psychological push and a pull--"a pull back to the womb" and "a push toward self-dependence."¹⁷¹ These two psychological forces which find their roots in the "birth trauma" itself color all life-cycle changes. He writes:

The inner fear, which the child experiences in the birth process . . . has in it already both elements, fear of life and fear of death, since birth on the one hand means the end of life (former life) and on the other carries also the fear of the new life.¹⁷²

He suggests that both of these fears, the fear of losing the past and the fear of the new, are in fact the same primary fear--the fear of separation. Journalist Gail Sheehy has borrowed this distinction, arguing that "the push-pull is underlying all steps of development."¹⁷³ In every life-cycle transition the "Merger Self" beckons back towards the comforts of safety and the known, while the "Seeker Self" urges to confront the unknown and take chances.¹⁷⁴ She concludes that developmental growth inevitably involves a risk. She writes:

Growth demands a temporary surrender of security. It may mean a giving up of familiar but limiting patterns, safe but unrewarding

¹⁷¹Otto Rank, The Trauma of Birth (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1929), see p. 24.

¹⁷²Otto Rank, Will Therapy (New York: Knopf, 1936), p. 173.

¹⁷³Sheehy, p. 36.

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 39.

work, values no longer believed in, relationships that have lost their meaning. As Dostoevsky put it, 'taking a new step uttering a new word is what people fear most.' The real fear should be of the opposite course.¹⁷⁵

The question now emerges; if risk is an element in all developmental growth, what enables a person to face that risk? This author suggests that Erikson's concept of basic trust provides an answer. A loss experience, especially a severe one, is a blow to a person's sense of basic trust. It is initially experienced as an unpredictable and usually as an evil event. It momentarily strengthens the mistrust pole in a person's ratio of basic trust to basic mistrust. In this way the current developmental crisis initiates a re-living of the first primal conflict between basic trust and basic mistrust. A healthy person with a stable sense of basic trust will weather the current crisis by relying on a storehouse of previous trustful life-experiences beginning in the first year of life itself. Basic trust will become one of the tools that facilitate a person's developmental growth. A stable basic trust will do this by enabling a person to ground his/her security in "something" ¹⁷⁶ other than the object or person which is now lost. Thus they are freer to let go of that lost object. In other words they are freer to grieve. Similarly, basic trust can also enable a person

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 353.

¹⁷⁶Erikson seems to suggest that basic trust is trust in the predictability and goodness of life itself or the sum total of such experiences. And yet, it has been clear from this study that nothing in life including life itself, is permanent. All of life and all of life's attachments are temporary. It would seem obvious to this author that a basic trust that was grounded in something more ultimate or eternal would be stronger and more helpful to a person coping with a changing life than otherwise. This prospect will be explored in Chapter Four.

to deal with the fear of the new or future. Again a stable sense of basic trust enables a person to trust that life can be predictable and good again, in spite of the present loss and its pain. A person can trust that the new can be as good as the old. In short, a person hopes. In these ways basic trust or faith can be a facilitative factor in enabling a person to make the transition from one life-stage to another.

F. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter it has been argued that loss is pervasively and inevitably present in the entire life cycle. This is so because humans inevitably form emotional attachments to all sorts of places, people and things, but life constantly changes, demanding that these attachments be periodically altered or given up. The awareness of loss seems to be more keenly felt in the second half of life, when the rapidity of loss events gradually increases. But whenever loss is present, the normal response of the individuals involved is grief. In order for a person to grow developmentally--pass into the next life-stage--and maintain his/her developmental health, he/she must emotionally "let go" or grieve that which was lost by recent life-cycle changes. The successful completion of the grief process is then at least one key element in enabling a person to grow developmentally.

The facilitating factors that enable a person successfully to grieve various developmental losses include first and foremost the free expression of grief emotions. A network of caring people is one important element in facilitating a person's grief. This is so in part because community provides a context in which a person can express his/her

emotions and provides a comforting and caring support system for that individual. Rites of passage can also be another important facilitative factor primarily because they provide a ritualistic structure in which a person can express his/her grief emotions in socially acceptable ways, and secondarily because they strengthen community ties and aid in the resolution of the meaning dimensions to the grief. While persons experiencing loss need a sense of meaning, it was not clear from this study if or how a particular meaning-system facilitated or blocked a person's grief process. Much depended on the content of the meaning-system itself. Finally, faith (or trust) seemed to be an important element in enabling a person to grow developmentally throughout the life cycle. Trust, rooted in something besides that which is being lost, enables a person to risk the inevitable insecurity of letting go of the past and venturing into the future. Questions, however, remain regarding the content in which that trust is rooted.

Chapter 4

A PAULINE PERSPECTIVE ON GRIEF AND LOSS

"ὥστε παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς
 λόγοις τοῦτοῖς."
 St. Paul

A. INTRODUCTION

Grief is a fascinating subject in biblical literature. The Old Testament and the gospel traditions are full of rich and vivid examples of grief. Two of the most vivid examples are Job's repeated sufferings and Jesus' contemplation of his own death in the Garden of Gethsemane.² This dissertation, however, is only concerned with Paul's understanding of grief and its relationship to spiritual growth. Before a complete theological understanding is possible, the necessary Biblical analysis must be completed.³ Therefore, this chapter will focus on a Biblical analysis of Paul's understanding and treatment of grief. In the following chapter, these conclusions will then be set into the larger context of Pauline theology.

Like most laypeople in psychology, Paul understands grief as the human pain felt in response to death, suffering and hardship. Paul

¹"Comfort one another with these words"—I Thessalonians 4:18.

²This latter story is an excellent example of anticipatory grief and would make a fascinating study in light of modern psychological insights.

³To repeat, this dissertation limits itself to the following Pauline documents: Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, I Thessalonians, Philippians and Philemon.

has relatively little to say regarding grief per se. He does, however, have a lot to say about death, suffering and hardship, of which the common theme is loss as noted in earlier chapters. Therefore a Pauline understanding of grief must be set in the larger context of his understanding of loss, including death, hardship and sufferings. Appropriately, the first half of this chapter is entitled, "How Paul Understands Loss."

The second half of this chapter, entitled "How Paul Handles Grief," focuses on how Paul's theology of loss informs his pastoral approach to grief. Here Paul's pastoral approach to grief must be pieced together from many different Pauline themes. An analysis of both Jewish and Greek cultural background material and prevailing customs regarding grief will also be important. As a Jew by birth and a missionary to the Gentiles, Paul is no doubt influenced by both great cultural traditions.

Thus this chapter is divided into two overall questions: a) How does Paul understand loss? and b) How does Paul handle grief?

B. HOW PAUL UNDERSTANDS LOSS

1. Word Studies

Affliction (θλῦσις). The term θλῦσις in secular Greek literally means "to press," "to squash," "to rub," or "to pressure" in the physical sense. In the figurative sense, it means "to afflict," "to oppress" or "to harass." This latter figurative use is the predominant usage in the Biblical literature. In the LXX θλῦσις is used for several Hebrew terms, all describing some kind of affliction. צַר, לַחַץ and יָגוּחַ

are all translated by $\theta\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\beta\omega$; and $\pi\zeta$ and ζ as $\theta\lambda\tau\psi\iota\varsigma$. It seems that $\theta\lambda\tau\psi\iota\varsigma$ is a general term, describing many kinds of afflictions or sufferings. It may refer to political constriction (Neh 9:27), war (Deut 28:55f.), oppression (Ex 3:9), exile (Deut 4:29), the affliction of slaves (Deut 23:17), personal injury, or even occasionally used as an inner state of anxiety caused by afflictions (Job 15:54). The exact kind of affliction is often obtained by using $\theta\lambda\tau\psi\iota\varsigma$ with a synonym, like $\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\eta$ ("inescapable distress") or $\sigma\tau\epsilon\nu\omicron\chi\omega\rho\acute{\upsilon}\alpha$ ("hopeless situation"). In general, $\theta\lambda\tau\psi\iota\varsigma$ designates afflictions which are the outward conditions of life (Job 5:6-7). The Old Testament concern is more with the purpose of suffering, rather than with its origins.

Theologically, $\theta\lambda\tau\psi\iota\varsigma$ predominantly denotes the oppression and affliction of the people of Israel or in some cases the righteous individual. Israel experienced oppression both in Egypt (Ex 4:30) and in Exile (Deut 4:29) as $\theta\lambda\tau\psi\epsilon\iota\varsigma$. Throughout the history of Israel $\theta\lambda\tau\psi\iota\varsigma$ plays a significant and powerful role in salvation. $\theta\lambda\tau\psi\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ are repeatedly experienced as God punishing Israel for unfaithfulness. Their purpose is to foster repentance, faith and obedience. The deeper purpose of God's punishment was a kind of divine education.

The underlying assumption was that God's moral order governed the universe. Therefore, the righteous receive God's blessings, and the unrighteous received God's judgment (if not immediately, then eventually). If this assumption is so, then it was particularly difficult for biblical writers to understand why the righteous individual had to suffer at all (Job, Ps 44). A similar question confronted the righteous remnant. In prophetic literature suffering took on a special meaning, as one

attempt to answer that question why the righteous suffered. A part of being a prophet included a certain amount of vicarious suffering, as a way of taking upon himself the punishment of the nation (Jer 8:18-21; Is 53:2-12). Suffering had the purpose of facilitating the redemption of Israel. In later Old Testament literature, suffering becomes increasingly individualistic and futuristic, but the close association of θλῦψις with God's salvation continues. On the day of judgment (ἡμέρα θλίψεως) God would vindicate his people and punish the unfaithful in waves of intense eschatological sufferings (Is 3:14-15; Dan 12:1; Wis 3:1-5).

In the New Testament, θλῦψις is one of the key words in Paul's thought. He uses it twenty-four out of the forty-five times in the New Testament. Furthermore, he uses a wide variety of synonyms. Thus, there is the combination of στενοχωρία with θλῦψις (Rom 2:9; 8:35; 2 Cor 6:4; 1 Thess 3:7) with general overlapping meanings. Occasionally, στενοχωρία refers to afflictions which have reached their goal (2 Cor 4:8), but in 1 Cor 7:26 the θλῦψις which is still to come is called ἐνεστῶσα ἀνάγκη. Frequently, δωγμός is also used along with θλῦψις (Rom 8:35). But in general, θλῦψις seems to be the broader term in Paul's mind, of which persecutions, war, imprisonment, poverty and sickness are concrete examples. In Rom 8:35 Paul lists seven θλίψεις of which θλῦψις is the first: θλῦψις ἢ στενοχωρία ἢ δωγμός ἢ λιμός ἢ γυμνότης ἢ κίνδυνος ἢ μάχη. Occasionally, too, Paul uses θλῦψις in reference to an inner state of affliction or distress (Phil 1:17; 2 Cor 2:4—ἐκ γὰρ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας).

Sorrow (λύπη). The term λύπη in common Greek usage means "pain," "sorrow." It can mean physical pain or sorrow of the spirit. When referring to physical or external pain, λύπη can denote any pain, although common are the pains caused by hunger, sickness or temperature. When referring to spiritual or emotional pain, λύπη is sorrow, or the internal pain caused by misfortune or death. The latter meaning comes the closest to our understanding of grief.

In Greek thought the opposite of λύπη is ἡδονή. ἡδονή and λύπη are intermingled most notably in the dramas, poets and tragedies of classical Greek literature. The two are understood to be strangely linked in all of life. It seems that in the Greek perspective, there is no ἡδονή without λύπη. The causes of λύπη are plentiful. One can bring sorrow on oneself or attract it by one's deeds. But the worse pain is the pain which one causes oneself. When a person goes beyond the mean, delighting in the extremes of ἡδονή, he/she inevitably finds λύπη. Both ἡδονή and λύπη seem to be as unavoidable in life as are misfortune and death.

In the Graeco-Roman consolation literature there is further interest in λύπη, misfortune and death. People are all understood to be mortal and as such must experience a share of misfortune. In fact, good fortune must be balanced by misfortune in a person's life.⁴ Life is indeed very uncertain. The best preparedness is to γινῶσι σεαυτόν ("know thyself")—to realize that one's mortality and that death is the fate of

⁴See the story of Philip, paragraph #6, in Plutarch, "A Letter of Condolence to Apollonius," in his Moralia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), II, 105-214.

all. Through reason, one can be prepared at all times for misfortune and suffering.⁵ Ignorant are those, who through their ceaseless wailing over the dead, indicate their lack of wisdom.

Death, however is understood not as an evil but in fact as a good, because it releases one from the *ἡδονή* and *λύπη* of life. Plutarch⁶ notes that the wise Socrates suggested that death is either sleep, a long journey or complete destruction.⁷ But in any case, there is no *λύπη* or *ἡδονή* after death because death releases the soul from the body. The ills of the body, including *λύπη* and *ἡδονή*, prevent one from any opportunity in this life to think seriously and purely.⁸ The body's *ἡδονή* and *λύπη* enslave the self, leaving no time for study. They distort the perception of the truth. Pure wisdom then is available only after death releases one from the association with our bodies.⁹ Until then, the truly wise person must divest him/herself from his/her body as much as possible. In death the soul returns to its state prior to birth when it felt neither *λύπη* or *ἡδονή*.

λύπη in the Septuagint is not the accepted nor even the preferred rendering of any one Hebrew word. It is used for many words indicating pain, sorrow, annoyance, etc. The meaning of *λύπη* varies accordingly. It can denote physical exertion and trouble (Gen 3:17). It

⁵See paragraph # 20, *ibid*.

⁶Plutarch's authorship of "A Letter of Condolence to Apollonius" is highly questionable due to the incongruities of style and the unusual length of quotations.

⁷See paragraph #20ff., *ibid*.

⁸See #13ff., *ibid*. ⁹*Ibid*.

can also mean internal pain, sorrow at the death of relatives (Gen 42:38; 44:29), at foolish children (Prov 10:1), or lamentation at the loss of Jerusalem or the nation (Lam 1:22). The phenomenon of λύπη as grief or sorrow is plainly seen in the Old Testament literature. It is evident in the prophets, the Psalms, but especially in Lamentations and Job. λύπη or lamentations are the emotional responses to suffering, affliction or death.

In the Old Testament λύπη is generally accepted as a part of life, and expressed openly. There is very little theoretical reflection upon it per se. Rather, λύπη and lamentations are a part of the larger category of suffering (θλῦσις) and upon this question there is much reflection (as is already noted). Suffering and pain have their origin in the transgression of Adam. God imposed physical pain and the toil of work on the human race as a punishment for the sin of Adam and Eve. From this time forth, the world stands under God's judgment. Life is inevitably, then, full of suffering and pain, but someday at the day of salvation λύπη and θλῦσις will be vanquished (Is 35:10; 51:11).

The idea of suffering as divine punishment continues throughout the Old Testament. This is understood corporately when military defeats are seen as God's punishments for the nation's unfaithfulness and immorality. The idea is also expressed individually, when Job's friends suggest that his suffering is God's punishment for past sins. Through the grief and lamentations the guilt is expiated and the sinners reconciled. Thus, grief serves the purpose of redemption.

In the New Testament literature, λύπη is used generally for sorrow, grief, pain (2 Cor 7:10; Jn 16:6ff.; 1 Pet 2:19). Lk 22:45 reveals

the deep sorrow of the disciples in Gethsemane. Similarly, Jesus describes himself as περὶ λυπός. . . ἕως θανάτου (Mt 26:38), in a Biblical example of anticipatory grief. In the Johannine tradition, the disciples are described as having λύπη over the departing Jesus (Jn 16:20-22). Here is the typical New Testament contrast between λύπη and χορός (also in 2 Cor 2:3; 6:10; Phil 2:27). The Greek contrast between λύπη and ἡδονή is unknown. Instead, ἡδονή is used strictly as an ethical term for the desire of the world. In the face of λύπη, the New Testament promise and experience is captured in Jn 16:20: ἀλλ' ἡ λύπη ὑμῶν εἰς χαρὰν γενήσεται ("but your sorrow will become joy").

In Pauline literature λύπη is used as a general term for sorrow, grief or pain. Paul expresses his sadness at the unbelief of the Jews (Rom 9:2). Epaphroditus' possible death (Phil 2:27) would have been λύπην ἐπὶ λύπῃ for Paul. Paul decides (2 Cor 2:1f.) not to make another painful visit (ἐν λύπῃ) to the Corinthians.

Paul also continues the curious Old Testament usage of λύπη as self-judgment. Paul does not want to cause the Corinthians λύπη, but if he must it is for the purpose of leading them to repentance (2 Cor 2:4; 7:9). In 2 Cor 7:9-10 Paul contrasts two kinds of λύπη. The right kind, ἡ κατὰ θεόν λύπη is a deep sorrow that leads to μετάνοιαν, and then to salvation. For such λύπη, Paul assures the repentant Corinthians that he does not feel regret. But, ἡ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη leads to death, because even though one may feel pain, there is no desire for repentance. Thus, the person is confirmed in his/her state of spiritual death. For Paul this is a regrettable thing. So λύπη can have a good purpose if it leads a person to repentance and salvation. As noted earlier, this

usage of λύπη continues a long Old Testament tradition which understood the purpose of suffering and pain as divine instruction. In modern psychological terminology, this usage of λύπη is confusing. λύπη as self-judgment is closer to the modern understanding of guilt, and consequently not purely grief as herein defined.¹⁰

2. Pauline Texts

1 Thess 4:13-18. The context out of which this section grew seems to be that some Thessalonian Christians have died and their loved ones are worried over the status of the dead in the coming παρουσία. The emotional context is one of grief and mourning. Yet, the precise issue is not the validity of the resurrection per se, but the order or chronological position of those who have died prior to the παρουσία. In some Jewish apocalyptic traditions (Izra 5:41; 2 Bar 50:1-4) it is suggested that the dead would not be resurrected until the end of the Messianic kingdom, rather than at the coming of the Messiah. If that is the case, the dead members of the Thessalonian Christian community would not share with their loved ones in the glory and joy of the παρουσία. They would remain dead, and thereby apart from their loved ones, until the τέλος (1 Cor 15:24). Paul, on the basis of high authority (ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου) corrects this misunderstanding (or perhaps he never mentioned

¹⁰This confusion of grief and guilt continues in modern expressions. We say, for example, that we are "sorry for our sins." Do we mean guilt or grief? Modern psychological studies of grief have confirmed the close association of guilt with grief. Guilt is often a normal part of the grief experience. Yet guilt and grief are separate emotions, with a subtle but important distinction revolving around the issue of personal responsibility.

it to begin with) by saying that those who are left alive at the παρουσία will not precede those who are not dead (v. 15). Rather, the οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ will be raised and joined with all those alive, as they ascend to meet the Lord together (v. 17).

The implied eschatological time-table which Paul has in mind is spelled out more precisely in 1 Cor 15. Death entered the world through Adam and reigns supreme until Christ. In Christ's resurrection there is the ἀπαρχή of a new age which is dawning. Next, at the parousia, those who belong to Christ will be raised (v. 23). When compared with the Thessalonian passage, one must assume that οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ includes both the living and the dead. After the parousia, Christ continues to reign until τὸ τέλος when he has destroyed death, the last enemy (v. 26). Finally, when Christ completes this subjection of all things, he will turn the kingdom over to God, and will be himself subjected to the Father, so that, as Paul says, ὁ θεὸς τὰ πάντα ἐν ᾧ σὺν. The significant conclusion from this eschatological time-table, is that death still reigns in this age, although initially defeated in Christ's resurrection. Christians and their loved ones still must die, and the survivors still must grieve their loss.

Death is a significant concept in Pauline thought. He uses the common Greek word, θάνατος 45 times, and νέκρωσις twice more (2 Cor 4:10 and Rom 5:19). Death is frequently used in the context of discussing θάλασσα, indicating the close relationship of these two ideas. θάνατος is the last, and ultimate θάλασσα. θάνατος is always a real threat and a possible result of increased θάλασσα (2 Cor 11:23; 1:8). But more than the ultimate θάλασσα, death is also the power behind all afflictions.

Paul sees θάνατος in the intolerable weight of his sufferings (2 Cor 1: 8f.). He experiences his afflictions as the νέκρωσις τοῦ Ἰησοῦ in his own body (2 Cor 4:10). He regards these sufferings as the ἐνεργεῖσθαι of death "in us" (2 Cor 4:12). Thus, at the end of his list of afflictions in Rom 8:36, he interprets this list with a quote from Ps 44: ἕνεκεν σοῦ θανατούμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐλογύσθημεν ὡς πρόβατος σφαγῆς ("For your sake, we are being killed all the day; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."). Until the final victory, the church still lives under the power of death, of which θάψις is its chief sign. For Paul, then, death and suffering (and therefore grief and pain) are an inescapable part of the Christian life in this world. The frequent and necessary afflictions of Israel have become the necessary tribulation of the church. The church still lives in a sinful and evil age (even if it is fading), an age ruled by the power of death, where the truly righteous will inevitably suffer (1 Thess 3:4).

According to Paul the purpose of this Thessalonian section is to comfort: παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους (v. 18). In fact, this is a type of consolation literature, within the larger epistle format. The stated purpose of consolation reaffirms that the Thessalonian context is one of grief over the recent deaths of loved ones. A similar context might be behind 1 Cor 15 as well. Certainly, the Corinthian chapter, while not intended to be consolation, has been used as consolation by the church throughout the ages. In the Thessalonian passage, Paul desires to comfort by imparting a new knowledge. Through this knowledge he hopes that they might no longer have to grieve as others do, who have no hope (v. 3). The οἱ λοιποὶ seems to refer to non-believers, as suggested in the

earlier τοὺς ἔξω of verse 12. The contrast is between Christian hope and pagan unbelief. Christians may grieve when they lose someone they love (Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:26; 7:30). Grief is not the issue at stake here. Rather, Christians because of their hope do not need to grieve in so far as the parousia is concerned. Their loved ones will participate fully in that joyous event. And since this joyous reuniting is soon, Paul can write in 1 Cor 7:30 that they can grieve as if there has been no loss at all. This Christian hope is to be contrasted with the non-believers who do not know God, and therefore have no hope. Their grief is therefore hopelessly compounded for this life and the next.

This theme highlights another important Pauline theme: the close connection between grief and hope. For Paul there is a close connection between suffering, death and hope (2 Cor 4:16-18; Rom 5:3-5; 8:18ff.). The connection is that the sufferings of the present time, including the untimely death of loved ones, can actually be hopeful signs. The advent of increased θλῦσις will mark the dawning of the Messianic age. That age of comfort began in Christ's death and resurrection, and will be soon culminated in the parousia. This new age will be characterized by comfort (Mt 5:4) for the righteous. The writer of 2 Thessalonians notes the close connection between comfort and hope: παράκλησιν αἰωνιάν (2:16). Thus for Paul their present comfort is set in the larger context of God's eschatological comfort, revealed in Jesus Christ and promised in His return. For Paul, then, true consolation is possible and based upon eschatology.

2 Cor 1:3-11. Paul has just been through a series of afflictions and sufferings that brought him painfully close to death (vss. 8-9).

He is obviously relieved and thankful for his recent deliverance. He begins immediately (v. 3) with a litany of thanksgiving, which literarily suggests the Jewish blessing formulas, and within the next four verses he uses the word, παρακαλέω, ten times. These early verses are a kind of self-consolation, a form of consolation literature not uncommon in the Greek world. In his self-consolation, Paul reflects theologically on how he understands his own suffering and pain. The key to his thought appears to be verses 5-6. The phrase, τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, can be read two ways: a) as suffering experienced by Christ; b) as Messianic sufferings which are ushering in the new age. Both readings suggest Pauline concepts. Verse six emphasizes the purpose of suffering in Paul's mind, which is ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας.

In its simplest form, Paul understands himself to be imitating Christ. Christ, too, suffered. It was a necessary part of His vocation as Messiah. He too achieved his mission by submitting patiently and obediently to suffering and death. So, Paul understands his suffering as being given up (παραδιδόμεθα) to death, just as Jesus was παραδίδομεν to death. Paul carries in his body the τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. As he suffers he shares and imitates Christ's passion and death. Christ set the pattern for dealing with suffering and death: patience and obedience. His patience and obedience were acts of faith in God. In return, God vindicated Christ in raising him from the grave. So too, Paul understands his deliverance to be a resurrection-salvation experience (vss. 9-10; 4:10-11). The same idea is reflected in Phil 1:29 and 3:10-11. By sharing the suffering of Christ, Paul also shares the resurrection of Christ. Again, Paul understands the experience of deliverance from

death and suffering as an act of God's grace, similar in pattern to Christ's pattern of obedience-deliverance. Behind Paul's imitation concept lies a profound theological conviction: that God does indeed deliver and resurrect. Therefore, Paul can advise the Christians to imitate Christ, because God does deliver. Or as Paul puts it to the Corinthians: μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, καθὼς καὶ ἡ Χριστοῦ ("Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.").

Coupled with the idea of *Imitatio Christi* is the vicarious nature of Christ's suffering. It was suffering and pain that had a redemptive purpose. It was for the salvation of the world. Paul now understands himself to be suffering on behalf of the church (v. 6) which is the body of Christ, as Christ first suffered on behalf of his body, the church. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, apostleship seems to necessitate excess suffering on behalf of the people. Thus, while sufferings are an inescapable part of being Christian, they are especially unavoidable for the apostles. The affliction of the apostles, and in particular of Paul, is distinguished from other Christians by the excess of sorrows. But Paul understands his excess or special sufferings as having a redemptive purpose. Through his sufferings and pain, he accomplishes his mission which is to preach the Gospel and build up the church. The same theme is reflected in Phil 1:12 where Paul sees his imprisonment as serving to advance the Gospel. It is ὑπὲρ τῆς σωτηρίας, Paul tells the Corinthians. Later, in 4:15, Paul says it is δι' ὑμᾶς and the expansion of the Gospel. Thus, Paul understands his sufferings as having a redemptive purpose, in securing the salvation of others, in this case the Corinthians.

In a more cosmological sense, these special sufferings of Paul's are signs of the parousia. In apocalyptic thought the Messianic times will be marked by great waves of tribulation and suffering. Christ's sufferings began that process, a process which was to intensify with the approaching parousia (Mk 13 and parallels). So the sufferings of Paul and the church in general, is a continuation of that process, and further evidence that they are indeed in the last days. Therefore, Paul's sufferings can bring joy (Rom 5:1-5) because they are grounded in hope. The church, which is the very body of Christ in the world, continues to suffer, extending the very sufferings of Christ himself.

In the deutero-Pauline Colossians there is a further expansion of the same idea. The writer says that Paul rejoices in his sufferings because he completes (ἀνταναπληροῶ) the sufferings of Christ. Again, the suffering is for the sake of his Body, the church. The idea implies that Christ's sufferings were not yet used up, and so the early church, and in particular the Apostles continued to suffer as an extension of Christ's sufferings. When that suffering was complete, the parousia would be fully realized and as they shared in Christ's sufferings, so now, they would share in his glory and comfort (v. 5).

2 Cor 4:7-18. This section is a part of a larger argument in which Paul is explaining his understanding of his apostolic ministry (4:1-6:14). He has obviously just completed a series of afflictions and hardships (1:8-11). He now pauses again to explain the purpose of these afflictions; perhaps in response to an inquiry from the Corinthians. This section might also be considered a type of self-consolation. Note how many times Paul reassures the Corinthians that he is not discouraged

(5:6, 8; 4:1, 16).

There are in this section several ideas already previously noted in Pauline thought. He understands these afflictions as a necessary part of being an apostle and presenting the Gospel. His sufferings are on behalf of the Corinthians and the expansion of the Gospel (v. 15). He also understands his sufferings as participating in Christ's sufferings and death. He imitates Christ's pattern of dealing with suffering and death, and experiences his successive deliverance as God's resurrection power. In a series of antithetical phrases, Paul describes his afflictions and deliverances, as signs of Jesus' death and life in his body (vss. 8-10).

Verse seven suggests a new idea which has broader implications theologically for understanding the purpose of human suffering and pain. Paul suggests the image of ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν ("in earthen vessels"; RSV) as an appropriate description of his humanity. Because the apostle is very mortal and vulnerable, any success or vindication must be attributed to God's power. This is a curious idea. Paul literally boasts in his weakness and affliction (11:30; 12:11), so that he can attribute all success to God. The principle seems to be: the more I am weak, the more God is strong; the more I am suffering, the more God's power is shown in my deliverance; the more I grieve, the more God's comfort is operative. Thus Paul's weakness is transformed into God's power. This same principle seems operative in Paul's personal painful σκόλοψ (2 Cor 12:7). At first he seeks through prayer the elimination of pain, only to discover the theological truth, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται ("my power is made perfect in [your] weakness"; 2 Cor 12:9). This

transformation of weakness into strength is illustrated in Christ's own death and resurrection. Similarly, as Paul endures λύπη as Christ did, his weakness is transformed into strength and his pain into joy. The essential Pauline experience is: ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ τότε δυνατός εἰμι ("For when I am weak, then I become strong."), which illustrates the unique Christian understanding of λύπη.

Another significant Pauline understanding of suffering is captured in verse 17, which describes afflictions as παραυτίκα ἐλαφρόν. The resurrection of Christ which initiated the new age will be culminated in the parousia. The present sufferings, no matter how discouraging (2 Cor 1:8; Phil 1:21-24), are light and momentary in comparison to the coming parousia. With the image of a weight scale in his mind, Paul compares the present sufferings and the future glory (Rom 8:18). Similarly here, Paul contrasts the τὰ βλεπόμενα and τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα; πρόσκαιρα and αἰώνια. Obviously suffering and pain belong to the former category. Paul's understanding of suffering and pain has a profoundly eschatological character. These present sufferings are signs of the last times, and as such unavoidable and even necessary. But the time is short. The end has already begun in Christ's death and resurrection. So compared to the future glory and comfort that is soon to be ours, these afflictions are παραυτίκα ἐλαφρόν.

Therefore, Paul can advise his fellow Christians to be patient (Rom 5:3f.; 8:35) and to be steadfast (1 Cor 15:56). This patience, however, is firmly grounded in the eschatological hope that the time is short. Paul's conviction is that God will soon defeat death, the power behind suffering and pain, just as He initially defeated it in Christ's

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resurrection. By being patient, one is imitating Christ, but one is also confirming and giving testimony to confidence in the victory of God. Therefore, in a sense, patience increases hope (Rom 5:3f). So confident is Paul in this ultimate victory that he can even rejoice in his sufferings, *καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν*—a radical statement of faith in the face of suffering and pain.

3. Summary

Paul understands loss, whether caused by death, suffering or other hardships, to be an inevitable feature of this present eschatological age. According to Paul this age is still dominated by the power of sin and death. As such, loss is an inevitable part of human existence. Only in the Messianic age to come will all loss and sorrow be vanquished. Therefore in this age, grief and sorrow, the human responses to loss, are also unavoidable. In this sense grief is "natural," that is, built into the structure of human existence.

Besides this "natural" grief, Paul understands that Christians are prone to additional afflictions as a sign of the approaching Messianic times. This age is essentially an evil age, ruled as it is by the power of sin and death. Christians as a people who attempt to live contrary to evil, will inevitably suffer as a consequence even as their Lord suffered. Nevertheless, the increased affliction of Christians is in itself a hopeful sign that the new Messianic age is near and in that age to come all loss and grief will be vanquished for the faithful. Paul therefore believes that the best response of Christians at this time is to wait patiently for this new age to dawn.

Paul, as an apostle, understands his own special set of afflictions to be vicarious in nature. They are a part of and due to his apostolic mission. Thus, they serve the purpose of bringing redemption to others. As such, he understands himself to be continuing the sufferings of Christ and further advancing the dawning of the new age.

C. HOW PAUL HANDLES GRIEF

1. Word Study: Comfort (παρακαλέω, παραμυθέομαι)

The literal meaning of παρακαλέω is "to call [someone] to one's side." This is its common Greek usage. The Gospels convey this usage in the sense of "to ask" or "to beseech" as people turning to Jesus with requests for help. The second meaning of παρακαλέω is "to exhort" or "to admonish" which is common in Greek and Hellenistic usage. It is used in the New Testament to refer to missionary proclamation and sometimes as an introductory formula to pastoral admonition. The third sense of παρακαλέω is "to comfort" or "to console" which is rare in Greek thought, but more common in the LXX and Old Testament traditions (Isaiah, Psalms). One is immediately struck by the wide variety of uses of and in particular by the twofold meanings of "comfort" and "admonish." Sometimes both uses of παρακαλέω occur together, the imperative—to exhort, and the indicative—to comfort.

In secular Greek literature this twofold meaning is maintained, and often merged in the context of bereavement. In the Graeco-Roman consolation literature are found examples of consoling the griever by moral exhortation. Philosophers and poets frequently exhort the bereaved

with philosophical treatises on death and fortune, and countless examples of past heroes who suffered nobly. The concluding exhortation was always to cease grieving and/or to grieve within moderation. In philosophical consolation literature comforting often took the form of exhorting.

In the LXX παρακαλέω is used for several Hebrew words, but the predominant meaning is "to comfort." The LXX refers first to the comfort in bereavement (Gen 24:67; 37:35; 2 Sam 12:24; Job 29:25), but also can be used for words of comfort in any human loss (Job 2:11—his friends comfort him in his sufferings; Job 21:2—comfort of words; Gen 50:21—Joseph comforts his brothers with food; Ruth 2:13—Ruth is comforted by Boaz's kindness), as well as divine comfort.

It is interesting to note, however, that the meaning of παρακαλέω as "to comfort" is almost completely absent in those parts of the LXX which are not translations of the Hebrew books, but written originally in Hellenistic Greek. Here the predominant meanings are "encouragement" and "exhortation" rather than true comfort in distress. For example, παρακαλέω often means "to encourage" (1 Macc 4:53; 2 Macc 1:6; 13:12), or "to cheer" (2 Macc 4:34), or "to speak good words" (2 Macc 13:23), or "to strengthen" (2 Macc 15:7) and so on. This latter literature testifies to the wide variety of meanings of παρακαλέω in Hellenistic Judaism, and the absence of the more common Hebrew meaning, "to comfort."

In the New Testament the use of παρακαλέω is colored by the New Testament event of salvation. Comfort is promised in Mt 5:4 for the mourners in the final salvation, but this comfort is not the words of

man, but an eschatological comfort of God. In some sense the mourners already experience this comfort in the present time, as they stand under the promise already given. In Is 40ff. and other places, the Messianic age is described as an age of divine comfort for the people of Israel. This imagery is reflected in Simeon's anticipation of the *παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ* (Lk 2:25). At that time, like Lazarus who is carried into Abraham's bosom, it shall be said *νῦν δὲ ὧδε παρακαλεῖται* (Lk 16:25). Christian apocalyptic literature picks up the same vision of the final consummation, when God shall remove all suffering from His people (Rev 21:3-5). In Pauline literature the sense of *παρακαλέω* as "to comfort" is most predominant, reflecting Paul's ties to his Jewish Old Testament traditions, even though his manner is more like that of the Hellenistic Greek of the day (admonishing).

παραμυθέομαι literally means "to speak to someone" in the sense of coming close to their side, speaking in a friendly manner. This word also carries the twofold meaning of "to admonish" and "to comfort." In admonishing, one is urging someone to do or not to do something. In comforting, one is cheering, consoling, and reassuring someone. *παραμυθέομαι* does not occur in the LXX, but only in the books where the Hellenistic Greek is the original language. Here it means "to encourage," "to comfort," or "to soothe" whereas *παρακαλέω* means mostly "to admonish." Apparently in Hellenistic Greek, *παραμυθέομαι* became the more accustomed word for "comforting" while *παρακαλέω* took on more varied meanings, of which "admonish" was the most frequent.

παραμυθέομαι occurs only six times in the New Testament, and only twice in Paul (1 Cor 14:3; Phil 2:1), who seems to prefer *παρακαλέω*

for "comforting," particularly when referring to divine or eschatological comfort. Both words carry the twofold meanings of admonishing and comforting. The unity of the two meanings suggest the double nature of the Gospel itself: as indicative and imperative. God's grace is both a gift and a task. God's love is both consoling and challenging. The Word itself carries this same twofold function: to comfort and to challenge.

2. Jewish Heritage: Lamentations

The traditional ways of expressing grief in the Old Testament were through wailing and lamenting. The Hebrew term for this lamenting, קִינָה carries the original meaning of striking oneself. The substantive מִהפֶּךְ means a shrill cry or wail. The double meaning is reflected in the New Testament Greek, κόπτω, which means "to cut" but in the middle voice, "to mourn." Luke records that the grieving people τύπτοντες τὰ στήθη ὑπέστρεφον (Lk 23:48). To this day the Jewish ritual sign of grief is the rending of the garments.

Lamenting was an imperative duty of all people who were affected by the death, but especially by the immediate family. For a national figure or a king, lamentations were required of the entire nation. The more prominent the deceased, the wider the circle of people required to lament. Lamentations began immediately following death (Gen 23:2) in the very presence of the corpse (as the NT shows in Mt 9:23; Mk 5:38). It was continued on the way to the tomb and during the burial rituals. In general mourning lasted seven days, but later various periods of mourning developed reflecting the varying kinds of relationships to the

deceased.

These laments were not left to the inspiration of grief, but were determined by ritual. The predominance of the ritual aspect over the psychological led to giving a very important place to professional mourners (2 Chron 35:25; Amos 5:16; Jer 9:17ff.). Women had the chief role. They were called the שָׂרָה, "singing women" (2 Chron 35:25) or the הַקִּרְתָּנִים "mourning women" (Jer 9:17f.). The custom still prevails in the New Testament (Mt 9:23-24; Lk 23:27). The professional mourners were usually paid and had a certain skilled technique that was cultivated like an art. Besides wailing, these professional mourners had the responsibility of the eulogy, and/or writing of funeral songs or poems for the deceased. The lament was often accompanied by musical instruments. The flute was the preferred instrument of mourning because of the succession of high and deep tones (Jer 48:36; Mt 9:23). In general women played a more important role in mourning. Jeremiah calls all the women of the nation to *ἄρῃνος* (Jer 9:30) in anticipation of the coming disaster. Similarly, Ezekiel declares that the daughters of the Gentiles will accompany his lament for Egypt (Ezek 32:16).

Lamentations were ritualized prayers composed as poems honoring the deceased. The Old Testament has preserved several funeral lamentations or songs, of which David's lament for Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:18-27) is just one of the most famous examples. The book of Lamentations is another famous example. Lamentations is composed of five poems or grief liturgies written for the occasion of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Probably this collection of five poems was a part of a larger assortment of commemorative laments. Their form appears to be standard-

ized. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are given in succession throughout each poem appearing at the beginning of each verse. The dominant meter pattern is 3 + 2. The original literary form appears to be the individual funeral lament, now applied collectively to the nation. As Amos had applied the funeral lament to Israel earlier (5: 1-2), so the writers of Lamentations do the same here, picturing Jerusalem as a sorrowing widow. The third poem in particular shows the individual lament style, although the implied imagery is that of the nation.

In spite of the standardized form, Lamentations retains a remarkable emotional vitality and descriptive impact. There is a bitter realism in the book. The plight of the emaciated and dying children is described in detail. Cannibalism, provoked by extreme hunger, and the slaughter of the priests in the temple are cited as the ultimate denial of God's purpose in Israel. The primary aim of the poems is the catharsis of grief and despair, not just for the occasion, but for centuries to come as well. On appropriate memorial days, there were perhaps public recitals of these poems, giving license again for the expression of collective grief and pent-up emotions. Thus lamentations become a type of community ritual and a means of dealing with grief through collective rituals. But besides facilitating grief, these ritualized laments also facilitated repentance, reminding the participants that Israel suffered for her sins. Thus lamentations is associated with salvation, both in this life and in the Messianic age to come.

In the New Testament there not only is the continuation of the Old Testament mourning customs, but the prophets' theological under-

standing of the significance of lamentations in God's salvation. In Mt 2:17 the gospel writer quotes Jer 38:15, claiming that this prophecy has been fulfilled in the mourning of the women of Bethlehem: *φωνὴ ἐν Ῥαμα ἠκούσθη, θρήνος καὶ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὀδυρμὸς πολὺς* ("A Voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more"; Mt 2:16—RSV). In both cases the experience of lamentation is embedded in the context of salvation. The Old Testament *θρήνος* of the mother of Israel (Rachel) is applied to the mothers of Israel in the New Testament. By drawing this parallel to the sorrow of Rachel, which is now transformed into salvation and joy, Matthew was seeking to counter the charge that Jesus brought death to those of his own generation.

The lament of the women of Israel is found not only at the beginning of the life of Jesus but also at its end. But now the lament is over Jesus himself. His procession to the place of execution takes on the form of a burial procession: *ἠκολούθει δὲ αὐτῷ πολὺ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ γυναικῶν αἵ ἐκόπτοντο καὶ ἐθρήνουν αὐτόν* (And there followed him a great multitude of people and of women who wailed and lamented him"; Lk 23:27, RSV). Where the paid mourners usually bewailed the respected dead with eulogies and cries, the women of Jerusalem freely bewail Jesus on His way to a criminal's death. But Jesus forbids lamenting for himself, and demands instead, after the manner of the prophets, that they should engage in mourning for themselves and their children due to the coming destruction. There should be a general lamentation in anticipation of the eschatological destruction that is about to befall Jerusalem. So in the New Testament lamentation and mourning take on eschatological

significance as signifying the event of salvation, a salvation which shall transform lamenting into joy.

3. Greek Background: Consolation Literature

The lamentation rituals are not unknown in the Graeco-Roman culture. In fact, they seem quite common, especially among the common people. Again, women have a special role in funeral dirges. There is also the use of lament songs and standardized rituals. There is no doubt that professional men and women mourners were paid for their services. Plutarch records that Solon tried to reform some of the abuses of the mourning customs and limit lamenting to women closely related to the deceased. However, in the Hellenistic period, under the influence of the Orient and mystery religions, the lamentation rituals were always a popular form of grieving and comforting.

Intrinsically, everyone is called upon to comfort those in grief. In particular the philosopher had the officium consolandi in relation to his fellow educated friends. He went like a doctor to those who mourn and instructed them in the philosophical treatises on death, fortunes and examples of great men and women of the past who suffered such. Alongside of the philosopher was the poet who wrote poems of consolation, especially for national figures or otherwise famous people. The dying or dead themselves could actually be comforters to their survivors, by recording parting discourses on the nature of death and immortality. Especially numerous are the instances of mourners seeking to console themselves. It was thought that only a person who could console him/herself could be an example to others.

There are many examples of consolation literature from both Greek and Roman authors, and at least one from Plutarch attesting to the common ideas and style in Pauline times. Apparently these letters of consolation were standardized in form and content with certain predictable subjects being discussed. Seneca notes in referring to his consolation letter to Marcullus that he did not "observe the usual form of condolence."¹¹ Cicero notes that the usual means of giving comfort in a letter is: 1) to show that there is no evil or very little in death; 2) to discuss the common lot of life as full of evil; and 3) to show that it is folly to be overcome by sorrow.¹² The pattern of letters of consolation had a long literary tradition dating back to Homer and the public funeral orations at Athens, but apparently the consolation form was set by Crater in his letter to Hippocles on the death of his children in the 4th century B.C.¹³ Consolation letters were sent for a wide variety of reasons: death, exile, runaway slaves, loss of property. The bottom line in these letters was always "Mourning is futile," or "If you must grieve, do so with moderation and brevity."

Within the consolation letters, the predominant way of giving comfort was "by words" or exhortation. By reflecting upon the nature of death, fortune, immortality, one is persuaded by reason that grief is

¹¹Seneca, "On Consolation to the Bereaved," in his Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), III, 129.

¹²Cicero, Tusculan Disputations (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), III, 11,77.

¹³See "Introduction" in Seneca, Moral Essays (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), II, vii.

foolish; that it should be kept within bounds; and that it should be ended as soon as possible. In Plutarch's *Condolence to Apollonius*, the writer advises his reader to be moderate in all emotions: εὐλόγιστος δ' ὁ τὸν οἰκεῖτον ὄραν ἔχων καὶ δυνάμενος φέρειν δεξιῶς τὰ τε προσηνῆ καὶ τὰ λυπηρὰ τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ. . . . ("Sensible is he who keeps within appropriate bounds and is able to bear judiciously both the agreeable and the grievous in his life. . . .")¹⁴ Everyone has their share of misfortune, like a politician losing an office or like plants and animals who have both fruitful and adverse seasons.¹⁵ The best remedy for the cure of grief is reason: Κράτιστον δὲ πρὸς σλυπρίαν θαρμακὸν ὁ λόγος καὶ ἡ διὰ τούτου παρασκευὴ πρὸς πάσας τοῦ βίου τὰς μεταβολάς. Χρὴ γὰρ οὐ μόνον ἑαυτὸν εἰδέναι θνητὸν οὕτα τὴν φύσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅτι θνητῷ συγκληρὸς ἐστὶ βίῳ καὶ πράγμασι ῥαδιῶς μεθισταμένοις πρὸς τούναντιόν. ἀνθρώπων γὰρ οὕτως θνητὰ μὲν καὶ ἐφήμερα τὰ σωματα, θνηταὶ δὲ τύχαι καὶ πάθη καὶ πάνθ' ἀπλῶς τὰ κατὰ τὸν βίον. . . .

("Reason is the best remedy for the cure of grief, reason and the preparedness through reason for all the changes of life. For one ought to realize, not merely that he himself is mortal by nature, but also that he is allotted to a life that is mortal and to conditions which readily reverse themselves. For men's bodies are indeed mortal, lasting but a day, and mortal is all that they experience and suffer, and in a word, everything in life.")¹⁶

Seneca similarly writes in a letter of condolence to Polybium:

Reason will have accomplished enough if only she removes from grief whatever is excessive and superfluous. It is not for anyone to hope

¹⁴All English translations are from the Loeb Classical Library translations.

¹⁵See Plutarch, paragraph #5.

¹⁶Plutarch, *ibid.*, #6, p. 18.

or to desire that he should suffer us to feel no sorrow at all. Rather let her maintain a mean which will copy neither indifference nor madness and will keep us in the state that is the mark of our affectionate and not an unbalanced mind. Let your tears flow, but let them also cease. . . .¹⁷

A part of the standardized style of the consolation literature is the frequent use of examples and stories of past heroes who suffered well. Therefore, Seneca advises his mother, who is grieving over her son's exile, to study philosophy:

Do you return now to these studies; they will render you safe. They will comfort you; they will cheer you; if in earnest they gain entrance to your mind, never more will sorrow winter there, never more anxiety, never more the useless distress of futile suffering. . . . Philosophy is your most unfailing safeguard and she alone can rescue you from the power of Fortune.¹⁸

This is comforting by means of philosophy, which is full of the examples of noble men and women who had also suffered. The writer of Plutarch's letter of condolence to Apollonius writes, similarly: 'Αποβλέπειν δὲ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς εὐγενῶς καὶ μεγαλοφρόνως τοὺς ἐπὶ τοῖς υἱοῖς γενομένους θανάτους καὶ πράως ὑποστάντας. . . ("It is a good thing too to contemplate those men who nobly and high-mindedly and calmly have been resigned to the deaths which have befallen their sons. . . .").¹⁹ Comforting through examples is a very popular form of comforting in Hellenistic culture.

On receiving the news of the death of their infant daughter,

¹⁷Seneca, "De Consolatione ad Polybium," in his Moral Essays, II, 413.

¹⁸Seneca, "De Consolatione ad Helviam," in his Moral Essays, 11.17:5, II, 477.

¹⁹Plutarch, # 33, II, 192.

Timoxena, Plutarch compliments his wife on her sober and simple funeral style.²⁰ Her avoidance of the extremes of grief is noble, leading visitors to hardly know that they had lost a child. This is in contrast to most mothers who give up their departed children with *μενὸν καὶ ἀχάριστον πένθος* ("unwarranted and ungrateful grief") which is difficult to calm.²¹ A popular idea of the time was that grief, once begun was wild and uncontrollable (often the case in wailing customs). It was difficult to get rid of once it was let in the door. Therefore, one must resist grief "at the door" and not do anything to encourage it. In this connection, Plutarch dreads the *κακῶν γυναικῶν εἰσόδους* ("the visits of pernicious women") with their wailing, screamings and lamentations. They do not let grief subside, but rather add *πῦρ ἐπὶ πῦρ* ("fire to fire"). The origin of this understanding of grief lies in Aesop's story of Zeus giving honors to the various emotions. Mourning (*πένθος*) as the story goes was not present at the time of the giving of honors, but arrived late. So Zeus gave her the honors of *δάκρυα καὶ λύπας* ("tears and grief"). So if one shows Mourning disrespect, she will leave you alone; but if you show her tears and grief, it honors her, and she will love you and will be with you forever. Thus, Seneca is determined to "do battle with her grief" for it has gone on too long. "Such vices become deep rooted unless crushed at the start."²² In this philosophical

²⁰Actually Plutarch and his wife had already lost two infant children, a more common tragedy in the ancient world.

²¹See Plutarch, #39, II, 161.

²²Seneca, "De Consolatione ad Polybium," 1:7, II, 8-9.

understanding of grief, one can see the tension that must have existed in the Hellenistic culture between the lamentation customs and the philosophical/educated customs represented by the consolation literature.

In these letters of consolation, there are several well-established popular ideas that give comfort at the time of death. They can be easily summarized: 1) Life is full of misfortune and hardships, not the least of which is death itself. Life by definition includes both joys and hardships, both prosperity and adversity, both life and death. The events of life are totally unpredictable, subject only to the whims of Fortune. Therefore, the truly wise person is prepared. Conversely, those who mourn and grumble at every bad luck show their poor education.²³ 2) Out of the above view of life, death is understood as a part of life. Seneca writes: "So it is—nothing is everlasting, few things are even long-lasting; one thing perishes in one way, another in another, though the manner of their passing varies, yet whatever has beginning has also an end."²⁴ Death is the eventual fate of us all. "Death is in fact present in life, from the moment of birth we are fated to die."²⁵ Life is therefore best thought of as a loan διὸ καὶ μοίριδιον χρέος εἶναι λέγεται τὸ ζῆν ("a debt to destiny").²⁶ The life-loan may be called back at the desire of the lender. Therefore, Seneca advises Polybius: "Let us rejoice, therefore, in whatever shall be given us

²³Plutarch, # 30, p. 187.

²⁴Seneca, "De Consolatione ad Polybium," 1:1, II, 357.

²⁵Ibid., 11:1, II, 346.

²⁶Plutarch, #10, pp. 134-35.

and let us return it when we are asked for it."²⁷ 3) Death is understood as a release.²⁸ At the moment of death, the immortal soul is released from the body. After death, a person no longer is enslaved to either the passions or pains of bodily life. One is at peace, at rest, without suffering. The soul's release makes possible pure wisdom, undistorted from bodily passions. The soul returns to its pre-birth state,²⁹ a state in which it no longer suffers or feels pain. 4) Death is understood as a reward.³⁰ Death is in fact a good, because the soul is at rest and truly free. Those who die actually go on before those who remain. Seneca writes: "He has not left us, but has gone before."³¹ They have received their reward already. Dying is an advantage.

Perhaps the overall Greek philosophical approach to grief can best be summarized in the two inscriptions that Plutarch notes are inscribed at Delphi: γνῶθι σαυτόν ("know thyself") and μηδὲν ἄγαν ("avoid extremes").³² An aspect of knowing oneself is knowing that all people including loved ones are mortal. Suffering and death is the common lot of us all. The wise person will realize this and will be prepared for Fortune's adversities. And if one must grieve, the inscription,

²⁷Seneca, "De Consolatione ad Polybium," 11:3.

²⁸Plutarch, #10ff.

²⁹Ibid., # 15.

³⁰See the story of Agamedes and Troponius in Plutarch, # 14, p. 145, or the story of Cleobis and Biton, *ibid.*

³¹Seneca, "De Consolatione ad Polybium," 9:9, pp. 382-83.

³²Plutarch, 11:28, p. 182 or Seneca, "De Consolatione ad Marciam," 11:3, pp. 32-33.

"Avoid extremes" best fits the Greek philosophical advice. Grieve in noble moderation, with reason and brevity. Yet it is important to remember that this philosophical tradition expressed in the consolation literature stood in tension with the lamentation tradition, rituals and customs of the common people of the Hellenistic world.

4. Pauline themes

The Jewish lamentation tradition and the Greek philosophic literature represent two very different approaches to the emotions of grief and mourning. The lamentation tradition encouraged the free and demonstrative expression of emotions, whereas the philosophic tradition encouraged moderation, restraint and the control of reason. While the lamentation tradition was more dominant in the Jewish culture and the philosophical approach was more typical of the Greek mind, neither approach can be absolutely identified with either Jewish or Hellenistic culture. There were Greek lamentation rituals³³ and Jewish philosophical literature.³⁴ Both approaches were also subject to abuses and extremes, so much so that this author would not be willing to label either approach "more healthy" than the other. The lamentation tradition was prone to emotional extremism, the use of professional mourners as a substitute for personal involvement, and the degeneration of rituals into entertainment—none of which could be labeled as psychologically healthy.

³³As suggested by Plutarch's reference to the lamentations and wailings of women in Plutarch, # 39, p. 161.

³⁴The Old Testament wisdom literature could be seen as consolation literature, quoted to comfort the grieving.

Likewise, the philosophical tradition was prone to the repression of emotions, the denial of reality and the avoidance of genuine grief emotions—all of which are also anti-therapeutic.

Paul stood at the crossroads of both of these great traditions. He was born a Jew of the Diaspora and educated philosophically and theologically as a Pharisee, yet he took great pride in being a Roman citizen and an apostle to the Gentiles. The tension between these two cultural traditions color his pastoral approach to grief. Perhaps no single verse reflects this ambiguity more than 1 Thess 4:13: οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων, ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἳ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα ("But we would not have you ignorant, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.").

On the one hand, Paul observes that when Christians lose someone that they love, they inevitably grieve. In other passages as well (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:26; 7:30) he seems to acknowledge the inevitability and naturalness of grief in these troubled times. Yet on the other hand, he observes that Christians need not grieve like οἱ λοιποί ("non-believers") grieve. Christians have hope, an eschatological hope that they will be reunited with their loved ones soon. Their loss is therefore temporary, while the non-believers' loss is permanent and eternal. A Christian's grief is thus tempered by reason and knowledge, in this case, eschatological knowledge that "tones down" or somehow makes their grief different. Thus the influence of both approaches to grief is reflected in Paul. His general pastoral approach to grief is governed by a desire to acknowledge the painful emotions of a loss, while also tempering that

grief by knowledge that the Christian's loss is only temporary.

Specifically, Paul has many ways of comforting others who are grieving. "Comfort" is in fact an important and frequent word in Pauline literature. Some of Paul's ways of comforting are explicit in his writings and others are only implicit. They can be clustered around several key themes or motifs.

Comforting by words and knowledge. A typical Pauline way of comforting is captured in the imperative: παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις ("Therefore comfort one another with these words"; 1 Thess 4:18). Paul comforts his fellow Christians with words and advises them to do likewise with each other. Here is found an important Pauline principle: ethical imperatives are based upon theological doctrines. It seems to be a typical Pauline pattern to first explain the theological doctrine, and then to conclude with the ethical imperative that grows out of that doctrine. The transition is typically marked by the word ὥστε (or διό) (1 Thess 4:18; Rom 12:1; Phil 2:12; 1 Cor 15:58). For Paul pastoral care grows out of theology.

"Comforting by words" is a way of comforting that is illustrated in Paul's very letter writing style itself. He seeks to comfort his readers by sending his letters to them, telling them of his love, his activities, his theology, his advice and the greetings of other Christians from other places. One is comforted by knowing the activities of our loved ones, and being reassured that they are all right. Paul's theological treatises and ethical guidelines come close to a kind of moral exhortation, a not uncommon way of comforting in Hellenistic

culture. Beyond the mere means of comforting "by words," the content of those words is all-important. There are several key motifs.

Paul gives comfort by imparting to the Thessalonians new knowledge (4:13f). If they remain ignorant, they shall be grieving needlessly. This new knowledge comforts, but only if they accept it and believe in it. The specific knowledge that gives comfort in this case is knowledge that there is hope. The Thessalonians are comforted in the knowledge that their loved ones shall be *σὺν κυρίῳ* ("with the Lord"; 1 Thess 4:17). The Corinthians are comforted in knowing that the present sufferings are *παραυτίκα ἐλαφρόν* ("slight, momentary") in comparison to their future glory (2 Cor 4:17). The Romans are comforted by the knowledge that these sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be theirs (Rom 8:18). Paul's readers are comforted in the knowledge that the parousia is nearer than when he first began preaching the Gospel (Rom 13:11-12; 1 Cor 7:29). Paul's readers are comforted also in knowing the precise nature of that parousia, that the dead will not precede those who are alive (1 Thess 4:13ff.). This hope is based upon Christ's death and resurrection which is the "first fruits" of the new age. Paul's hopeful knowledge which he imparts to his readers is solidly grounded in the kerygma and its hope; while also adding important details as to the precise nature of that parousia.

Paul also knows what Job discovered centuries earlier that the most difficult aspect of suffering and sorrow is often the meaninglessness and pointlessness of it. Sorrow and suffering are easier to accept if it is clear that they serve a worthy purpose. Paul therefore comforts his readers (and himself) by emphasizing the purpose of suffering. He

emphasizes again and again that he is suffering for τὰ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς ("on your behalf"). It is for his readers, their comfort and salvation, and for the Gospel's expansion that he suffers. Paul understands this suffering "on behalf of others" to be an essential part of his apostolic office, like it was for his Lord before him, and the prophets before that. Suffering produces something. It produces endurance and hope (Rom 5:3ff.). It produces salvation and comfort (2 Cor 1:6). It produces stronger communal ties (Phil 1:7-8). It produces an expansion of grace (2 Cor 4:15). In noting the purpose of suffering and sorrow, Paul provides a meaning-system, an overarching purpose in which his readers can understand their sufferings and thereby be comforted.

Thus one of Paul's major ways of comforting grief-sufferers is by imparting to them new knowledge—hopeful knowledge about the coming parousia and reassuring knowledge that these sufferings are serving a purpose. As such Paul is using his theological resources to focus his comfort precisely at the meaning-crisis that accompanies all severe losses.

Comforting by exhortation. Another common way that Paul comforts is through exhortation, particularly the exhortation to be patient. It is expressed in 1 Cor 15:58 with the imperative ἐδραστοι γίνεσθε, ἀμετακίνητοι ("Be steadfast, immovable"). A similar theme is reflected in Paul's concept of ἡ ὑπομονή ("endurance") in Rom 5:3ff. It is also found in Rom 8:25 where one waits δι' ὑπομονῆς ("patiently"). It is also reflected in 2 Corinthians' frequent urging "not to lose heart" (5:6,8; 4:1,16). And in 1 Cor 13:7 when love's chief virtue is to πάντα

ὑπομένει ("endure all things"). All of these examples represent the same Pauline advice in the face of suffering and sorrow. It represents the basic Christian attitude toward the unbelieving and persecuting world.

There are two theological motifs that support this advice "to be patient." The first is rooted in Paul's eschatology. Paul's conviction is that the parousia will arrive soon, filled with glory and comfort for the righteous. The present age is passing. In fact, Paul suggests that their very afflictions are the signs that the time is short. The new age is dawning upon us, in waves of eschatological sufferings. Therefore, Paul can urge his fellow Christians to "be patient."

The other theological formulation supporting this advice is the imitation of Christ motif. Christ too suffered and died. In the face of his sufferings, he was patient and obedient. Christ set the pattern for dealing with suffering. Paul attempts to follow that same pattern and discovers that he too is delivered. Therefore, Paul suggests that his fellow Christians imitate him as he imitates Christ (1 Cor 11:1). As Christ was patient in his sufferings, so also Paul advises his readers to be "like Christ."

In this vein Paul occasionally reminds his readers of the sufferings and sorrows of other great men and women of faith. For example, Paul frequently tells his readers of his own sufferings and endurance. He also reminds them of Christ's sufferings and sorrow. In both cases Paul believes that through the patient endurance of suffering God brings about triumph and deliverance. This type of example-giving is primarily a form of exhortation. The explicit or implicit imperative is: do

likewise! It has been noted that in Greek consolation literature there was a similar telling and retelling of the stories of past heroes who suffered nobly. No doubt the Old Testament scripture functioned in a similar way. One received comfort and encouragement from reading the stories of Job, Jeremiah and the others who suffered and endured.

Example-giving and story-telling are also a more direct form of comforting than just exhortation. One is comforted by knowing that he/she is not alone in his/her suffering and sorrow. Comfort is experienced in the realization that one's suffering is not unique, but is in fact common to others, even men and women of great faith (see 1 Cor 10:13-14). Paul attempts to reassure his readers that they are not alone in their anguish and as God delivered the others (and himself) from their sufferings, so he will deliver you if you are just patient. Therefore, be patient!

Comforting by human contact. Behind Paul's letters are several personal visits with his readers. In every case, except Romans, Paul's letters were preceded by personal visits. Often these letters were followed up by personal visits. Without such visits, Paul's letters would not be effective. He knows and loves these people. In some cases he spent years living among them. Thus he instinctually knows what will comfort them.

Paul understands personal visitation as a means of comforting. He receives comfort from Titus' visit and the good news that he brings from the Corinthians (2 Cor 7:6). He receives comfort again in Timothy's visit from the Thessalonians (1 Thess 6:6ff.). Likewise in return,

Paul expresses his comfort in sending such people to his readers. His letters are often sent in the hands of personal disciples, who apparently have their own contacts and personal relationships with Paul's readers. By noting the wide variety of people sending greetings in Paul's letters (Rom 16; 1 Cor 16), one can easily sense the importance of personal contact and visitation in the early Pauline chronicles. Beneath Paul's letters lies a vast web of human relationships, that functions to support and comfort one another.

Besides personal visitations, Paul also encourages his readers to comfort each other. Paul characterizes the interdependence of the church in 1 Cor 12:26, εἴτε τὸς ἓν μέλος, συγχάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη ("if one member suffers, then all suffer") and instructs his fellow Christians to χαίρειν μετὰ χαυρόντων, κλαίνει μετὰ κλαυόντων ("rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep") in Rom 12:15. In Gal 6:2, Paul urges his fellow Christians to Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε ("Bear one another's burdens") and "so fulfil the law of Christ." What are the "burdens" if not the burdens of life itself, sorrow, suffering, and hardship. A similar theme is found in 2 Cor 1:3 where Paul notes the interrelationship between God's comfort and people comforting each other. Similarly, in 1 Thess 5:11 there is another imperative, "to comfort one another" as was seen a few verses earlier in 4:18. It is clear that a central Pauline way of comforting is through the mutual support and caring of the church. Paul knows that by sharing sorrow, the load is lessened, and strength is drawn for endurance.

Behind this principle is another central Pauline doctrine, that of the church as the body of Christ. The community of Christians are

the body of Christ in the world, the continuation of Christ's presence in the world. As Christ's life and ministry was characterized by love and compassion, so too shall the life of the church be so characterized. Just as Christ valued the weak, so too every member, especially the weak member, is to be valued in the church. And the entire fellowship is to be characterized by the greatest gift of them all: love. This theme is particularly expounded in 1 Corinthians where Paul is seeking to restore the Corinthian fellowship to unity and purity.

Comforting through human relationships is a major Pauline way of helping those who are suffering and grieving. This approach is supported not only by the web of personal visitations and travels that built these early churches, but by Paul's theological vision of the church as the living body of Christ in the world.

Comforting by rituals. As noted lamentation traditions and customs were practiced widely in the early church, rooted as they were in both Jewish traditions and Hellenistic culture. There is no explicit references to lamentation rites in the Pauline literature. In 1 Cor 15: 29ff., however, there is a reference to a vicarious baptism for the dead, which apparently the Corinthian Christians were practicing. If the emotional context is one of grief over dead loved ones, such a baptism ritual might easily function as a grief ritual. Being assured that one's dead loved ones were properly baptized and thereby assured of salvation, would be a very comforting gesture. Paul does not disapprove of this ritual and, in fact, uses its practice to support his argument for the validity of the resurrection of the dead. There might be further evi-

dence of comforting rituals in the references to the public recitals of Paul's letters (1 Thess 5:27; Col 4:16). Certainly many passages in Paul's letters and in the deuterio-Pauline epistles (Eph 3:1-21; Col 1:24-2:5) are consolation in flavor and were no doubt used as rituals of consolation in the centuries following their composition. This practice might have begun very soon, even during Paul's life-time.

Comforting by work therapy. In 1 Cor 15:58 is another imperative "to do the work of the Lord." If the emotional context of this letter's readers is one of grief, as is suspected, Paul's advice is all the more interesting. In the face of grief and suffering, Paul's advice is all kind of work therapy. Similarly, in 1 Thess 4:13-18 where the emotional context is also probably one of grief, Paul's instruction specifically includes "comfort one another." Perhaps Paul knows that work is very good therapy for grief. But it is more than mere work; it is "the work of the Lord." The work of the Lord is ἀγάπη. By caring for and loving others grief-stricken people can be lifted out of their grief and involved again in life. Paul suggests that work therapy, or better said, "love therapy," is an effective way of dealing with grief.³⁵

D. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the first half of this chapter Paul's theological understanding of loss was examined. It was noted that he understands loss, whether

³⁵In passing, it should be noted that this advice is psychologically sound in light of the discussion of grief as a function of attachment. Encouraging a person's emotional investment in new attachments would aid in the detaching of that person from past lost attachments.

caused by death, suffering, or other hardships, to be inevitable during this eschatological age, ruled as it still is by the power of sin and death. In this sense loss is an unavoidable and "natural" part of human existence. Secondly, Paul understood that Christians were prone to additional sufferings and loss due to their inevitable conflict with the evil of this age. Yet this affliction was in itself a hopeful sign that the parousia was near, a new age in which suffering and sorrow would be vanquished. Thirdly, Paul understood his own afflictions as a necessary part of his apostolic office, and thereby serving the purpose of advancing the gospel. He further understood that his sufferings were a continuation of the Messianic sufferings of Christ and thus serving the purpose of further advancing the dawning of the new age.

In the second half of this chapter Paul's pastoral approach to grief was examined. The two great traditions in dealing with grief and mourning, the lamentation approach and the philosophic approach, were examined. Representative of each approach, the Jewish lamentation tradition and the Graeco-Roman consolation literature were examined in detail. It was noted then that Paul, as a product of his age, generally reflected traces of both of these approaches in handling grief. It cannot be said that he favored either approach entirely. Specifically, he sought to give comfort to grieving Christians in several ways, each growing out of firm theological convictions. He comforted with words, by imparting new knowledge and meanings. He comforted by exhorting Christians to be patient and follow the example of Christ and himself. He comforted through human contact by encouraging mutual support and relying on his own personal contact and visitation. He comforted by

encouraging or at least acknowledging the importance of rituals. Finally, he comforted by encouraging his readers to re-invest themselves in the work of the Lord.

Chapter 5

PAULINE THEOLOGY OF LOSS AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

"Sometimes, God has to hit me with a two-by-four,
to get me to grow."
—Joan¹

A. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the insights and conclusions of last chapter's biblical analysis will be set within the larger context of Paul's theology. Specifically, this chapter will focus on the interrelationship of sanctification (or spiritual growth) and experiences of loss (and affliction). Besides an analysis of Paul's understanding of sanctification, the study of Pauline eschatology will also provide some important insights for understanding this interrelationship. A brief clinical interlude will also illustrate some of the ways in which people grow spiritually as a result of loss experiences. Finally, this chapter will close with a specific focus on the four factors—rituals, community, meaning-system, faith—and their role in facilitating spiritual growth in times of loss.

It should be remembered from the start that Paul is not a systematic theologian. In his great biography of Paul, Günther Bornkamm writes:

Paul was. . .a man engaged in missionary work, not a writer; indeed. . .he was not even strictly a theologian, but an envoy and

¹Joan was a member of one of this author's early grief growth groups. She had a pleasant habit of saying profound truths in concise phrases.

preacher, striving to complete his grandiose missionary program before Christ's imminent return. . . .²

Paul did not tell the gospel story in orderly fashion. He did not write theological treatises, nor a systematic dogmatics. His letters were written for particular occasions, to particular people, and often in response to specific questions. Attempts to develop a coherent Pauline theology or response to any particular topic is lined with frustrations. This is especially so when people come to the Pauline canon with modern pre-digested questions (as is the case here). Therefore, Paul's thinking on these subjects must at times be inferred from his treatment of other subjects. It is hoped that where this chapter departs from direct Pauline material, it nevertheless remains faithful to the spirit of his thought.

B. SANCTIFICATION: SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The noun ἁγιασμός ("sanctification") or the verb ἁγιάζω ("to sanctify") finds its roots in the Hebrew root קדש . In the Old Testament this term meant "separateness" or "to set apart" as sacred from ordinary use and was largely used in relation to cultic practices. In the New Testament times the terms "to sanctify" or "sanctification" are scarcely found outside of Biblical Greek, and the noun, "sanctification" occurs exclusively in the Epistles of Paul and other Gentile Christians. The related term, οἱ ἅγιοι ("the saints"), as a descriptive term for Christians, is common throughout the literature of the primitive church,

²Günther Bornkamm, Paul (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. xxi-xxii.

including Paul's writings. The RSV translates ἁγιάζω as "to sanctify" or "to consecrate" which Bultmann suggests reflects the influence of the Latin Vulgate. He prefers the simple "to make holy" (ἁγιάζω), "holiness" (ἁγιασμός), and "the holy ones" (οἱ ἅγιοι).³ Since the noun, ἁγιασμός ("sanctification") evolved in New Testament writings from the verb, "to sanctify" (ἁγιάζω), Procksch suggests that a more fitting translation of ἁγιασμός is "sanctifying" (instead of "sanctification"), which suggests the process-character of this concept.⁴

Paul's concept of sanctification is overshadowed by his dominant interest in justification. Paul's concept of sanctification must be formulated from several different passages and strands of material in his writings. Historically, sanctification has traditionally been understood in relation to justification. For Paul justification refers to the initial gracious act of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which "makes right" or righteous a person's relationship with God. When a person responds in faith to God's grace, he/she completes this initial stage of salvation, which is usually reflected in that person's baptism and incorporation into the Christian community. Sanctification, then, refers to the subsequential process of literally "being made holy" or being "transformed into the likeness of Christ" (2 Cor 3:12-18). In short, sanctification refers to a process, as opposed to

³Rudolf Bultmann, New Testament Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 338.

⁴Otto Procksch, "ἅγιος in the New Testament," in G. Kittel (ed.) Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), I, 113.

an initial decision, event or act of grace, as implied in the concept of justification. Sanctification is, however, a special kind of process. It is a spiritual growth process, a process of being transformed into the likeness of Christ or into what God intended for humanity in creation.⁵ Sanctification also occasionally refers to a status already conferred by divine grace in justification, to the eventual goal of salvation as seen in the coming parousia, as well as to the process of growth per se.

Sanctification is actually a rare word in Pauline writings.⁶ It is occasionally used as a synonym for justification (1 Cor 1:2; 7:14; 6:11), and occasionally used as a synonym for purity or holiness as opposed to immorality or the desires of the flesh (1 Thess 4:3,4,7). Paul also speaks of sanctification without using the word as such. Perhaps the clearest descriptive passage of sanctification occurs in 2 Cor 3:12-18. Here, Paul is addressing himself again to the question of the Jews' unbelief, this time, borrowing an analogy from the Old Testament. Paul interprets the story of Moses' veil (Ex 34:29-35) as an effort to hide from the Israelites how temporary the old covenant was. Like Moses standing before God with an unveiled face, Paul and his fellow Christians ("we") now see God face to face in Jesus Christ, or as Paul says,

⁵The process character of sanctification in part suggests why Paul had relatively little to say about it or why he had not developed it more thoroughly than he did. In Paul's time framework the Kingdom of God was about to break into history. He did not emphasize the long-haul, or growth process for Christians, because there was in fact very little time left. In fact it is remarkable that, given his eschatological views, he understood the sanctifying process at all.

⁶It is found five times in Paul, only 9 times in the whole New Testament.

"beholding the glory of the Lord." Through this living relationship with the Lord, Paul and his fellow Christians are "being transformed (μεταμορφούμεθα) into His likeness, from one degree of glory to another."

This verse suggests several insights. First, the growing-sanctifying process is clearly gradual and progressive ("from one degree of glory to another"). Secondly, the goal or telos of this process is to become "like Christ." The same goal is described in Gal 4:19 ("until Christ be formed in you") and Rom 8:29 ("...to be conformed to the image of His Son"). Later in the 2 Corinthians passage it is clear that Christ in turn is the "likeness of God." The Greek term εἶδος ("visible form," "kind") suggests the similar Hebrew term, דְמוּת in the Genesis story of creation (Gen 1:26). There humans were created in the image or likeness of God, but since the Fall, this divine likeness has existed only as a hidden potential within humanity. Jesus Christ was the visible image or likeness of God (in both his nature and his deeds). For Paul, the growth-goal of Christians is to be transformed into this same likeness: the likeness of Christ, which in turn is the likeness of God, which is also the same likeness given to humanity initially in creation. Thus theologically the sanctification-growth process completes the circle from creation through Jesus, through Christians, to the parousia, and finally to re-creation. In this sense sanctification is a part of God's overall salvation plan. Sanctification is God's will for humanity (1 Thess 4:3). God wants humans to grow spiritually, to become more like Christ.

Thirdly, to be transformed into the likeness of Christ suggests that sanctification is a multi-dimensional process. It is certainly

more than a mere physical likeness (2 Cor 4:16). It must include a likeness to Christ in the mind (Phil 2:5; Rom 12:2), a likeness to Christ in attitudes (Phil 4:8f.; Rom 12:9-21; 6:11), and a likeness to Christ in behavior (Rom 12:12-14). For Paul sanctification or spiritual growth is a multidimensional growth process, including at least a belief-meaning component as well as an action/behavior component. Fourthly, it is clear from this passage that this sanctifying process comes from the Risen Lord, who is the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the author and sustainer of this growth process (Rom 15:16b). In fact the close connection between the Holy Spirit and holiness or sanctification, has led Procksch to suggest that the descriptive term "holy" in reference to the Spirit suggests both its character and its operation.⁷ Besides being holy, the Spirit also functions to "make holy."

In several passages, Paul reflects growth motifs. For example, in Phil 1:9, 1 Thess 4:1, and 2 Cor 10:15 Paul hopes that his readers' faith, love or knowledge will grow. In 1 Cor 3:1 he regrets not being able to address the Corinthians as πνευματικοὺς ("men of spirit"), but instead they are mere νήπιοι ἐν Χριστῷ ("infants in Christ"). They are still not ready for solid food and must be fed now, as before, with milk. They have revealed their immaturity by κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε ("behaving in [ordinary] human ways"): quarreling, fighting among themselves and forming σχίσματα ("divisions"). Similarly, in 1 Cor 13:11 Paul compares the reliance on knowledge, prophecy or tongues as still being a child spiritually, whereas when he became a man spiritually he

⁷Procksch, p. 113.

gave up childish ways. In all of these passages Paul assumes a growth-process framework and advises his readers that salvation lies as much in the process as in the initial decision of faith.

Paul (Phil 3:12-16) employs growth imagery, this time in reference to his own spiritual journey. He realizes that he has not yet achieved spiritual "perfection," but he presses on toward that goal. The verb *τελειόω* is an interesting and difficult term in Paul.⁸ At times it can be translated "to perfect, or to make complete (or as a noun, perfection)" but this fails to capture the process character of the word. A better translation is "mature" or "maturity." So Paul advises his readers to strive after spiritual maturity. He further suggests that "those who are (already) mature continue to be thus minded, that is, growth-oriented. Here again, Paul assumes a growth-process framework for spiritual growth. Salvation is not limited to a one-time decision, however important, but must be maintained and strengthened through a process of spiritual growth.

For Paul this sanctifying-growing process is closely tied to the church and the unity of the church. As noted, Paul freely refers to Christians collectively as *οἱ ἅγιοι* ("the saints"). This suggests both a status already present—they are made holy in their conversion out of the world and into the church—and a process to evolve—Christians are in the process of being made holy. In 1 Cor 1:2 Paul refers to the Corinthians as *ἡγιασμένοι*, "those (already) sanctified" which reflects the first use and in 1 Cor 1:18 Paul refers to the Corinthian Christians

⁸It occurs seven times in Paul's writings.

as σωζόμενοι ("those who are being saved") which reflects the latter use. In 1 Cor 3:16 Paul suggests that the Corinthian church is a temple in which God dwells. The church collectively is holy, a holy temple, and divisiveness destroys that sacredness (see Mk 3:20f.). The same urgency and anger is reflected in 1 Cor 5 where Paul advises the Corinthians to drive an evil and immoral Christian out of the church (v. 13), "lest a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (v. 6). Paul wants to keep the church an holy society and a unified society. Again the term "holy" suggests both a description and a function. The church is both holy and functions to maintain and sustain holiness or sanctification. Outside of the church, sanctification or the maintenance of the sanctifying process is nearly impossible.

One additional verse needs special attention. In Phil 2:12-13 Paul advises the Philippians to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work in you. . . ." Again, this verse suggests a growth-process understanding of salvation. This verse also reflects a polarity between human effort and divine grace. Growth involves human effort, struggle and pain. Paul frequently reminds all of his readers of the imperatives and implications of the Gospel. In Rom 6:15-23 he likens the sanctifying process as a kind of slavery to righteousness: growth demands complete devotion to God. Yet, growth is also a product of the activity of God. Like the experience of justification itself, sanctification is also an experience of the free unmeritorious grace of God. Bultmann describes this polarity as between the indicative and the imperative.⁹ In one sense Christians are already "the holy ones"

⁹Bultmann, I, 338.

and in another sense they must work out their salvation. In 1 Cor 3:6, referring to the collective growth of the church, Paul refers to the Apostles' human efforts as planting and watering, but ὁ θεὸς ἡύξανε ("God gives growth!"). Growth is both a free gift and hard work. In a broader eschatological framework, sanctification includes both an "already" and a "not yet" character. It is initiated in the saving act of God, but will never be completed until the parousia (1 Thess 5:23-24; Phil 3:12).

Concluding this short overview of sanctification it is clear that Paul does have an understanding of the process and importance of spiritual growth, even though he does not always clearly label this process sanctification. It is clear from many strands of Pauline material that the sanctification process begins in the believer's initial response of faith and grows towards the likeness of Christ. This spiritual process is by definition multidimensional process. It is authored and sustained by the Holy Spirit. The goal of the process, even though never fully completed in this aeon, is the full actualization of each person's divine potential, as initially created in humanity and visibly revealed in Jesus Christ. The church, as a society of "holy ones," is a crucial instrument in maintaining this growth process. The dynamics of growth are experienced both as requiring human effort and as a free unmeritorious gift of God's grace. This sanctifying-growing process has been God's intention for humanity for the foundation of the universe and just as God's creative process continues to this day, the Spirit continues to lure, pull and invite each Christian to grow toward his/her full intended potential.

C. ESCHATOLOGY: JUDGMENT AND LOSS

Like most of his contemporaries, Paul's eschatology formed a central place in his theology and his understanding of human existence. As a Jew he inherited a strong eschatological tradition and an apocalyptic expectation of the imminent end of the world. Paul frequently refers to Old Testament images and allusions, like the judgment of fire (1 Cor 3:13), the last trumpet (1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16), the archangel's call (1 Thess 4:16) and the meeting in the clouds (1 Thess 4:17). Unlike the Old Testament apocalyptists however, Paul does not have a well-developed blueprint for the ending of history. At times his images are confusing and contrary.¹⁰ For example, many scholars suggest that Paul's eschatology actually changes with the passing of time and the delaying of the parousia.¹¹ Paul is more interested in the urgency created by the imminent arrival of the parousia than he is in the exact date of the parousia (Rom 4:18). He is more interested in the implications of the imminent parousia upon this present life than he is in the exact character of the next life. It is enough for him to realize that the parousia will come and that it will be a fulfillment of God's promises in Jesus Christ.

¹⁰For example, in 1 Thess 4:13ff. and in 1 Cor 15, Paul expects a general resurrection of the dead, whereas in Phil 1:21-23 he expects to be with Jesus immediately upon death. Again, in 1 Cor 7:31 Paul argues that the present order is passing away, whereas in Rom 13:1-10 he suggests that Christians must adjust themselves to the state.

¹¹See Charles H. Dodd, New Testament Studies (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), pp. 108-26 or (for summary of evidence) William Baird, "Pauline Eschatology in Hermeneutical Perspective," New Testament Studies, XVII (1971) 314-27.

Like his Jewish forbearers Paul understands history as a chronological progression. History or time which began in creation will end at the parousia. Both events, the creation and the parousia, will be authored by and ruled over by God. To the basic two-eon framework, Paul adds the theological confiction that the parousia has already begun in the advent, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The eschatological hope of the Hebrew prophets has been fulfilled in Jesus (Rom 1:1-6). The Christ-event marked the dawning of the new age. Further, the gift of the Spirit was also a fulfilment of Old Testament prophets (Joel 2:28; 1 Cor 2:6-13) and thus a sign of the "last days." Thus the church has become the new people of God, the remnant of Israel (Rom 9:22-33—this time, made up of Jew and Gentile alike) awaiting the consummation of the Lord. Being so convinced that the last times foretold by the prophets had begun, Paul believed that the parousia or the "day of the Lord" was imminent (Rom 13:11-14; Phil 4:5) and on that day Christ would return to earth to usher in the reign of God.

Paul understood his particular time as being a very unique age. It was the "in-between times." Christ had come. The former age was passing away. The new age had "already begun," but was "not yet" fulfilled. Full salvation would not be completed until the parousia (Rom 5:10; 8:23). This "already/not-yet" polarity gave the present age its unique character. "This present age" was still an evil age (Gal 1:4), dominated by sin and death (1 Cor 15:56). Only in the age to come would sin and death be ultimately defeated, although initially defeated in Christ's resurrection. In particular, ethics took on the stamp of this polarity. While the world was still ruled by evil and corruption,

Christians were called to begin to live according to the new age. Describing Paul's ethical commandments, Henry M. Shires writes, "The man of faith must continue to live in the age of Adam according to the principles of the age of Christ."¹² In fact some scholars argue that Paul's ethics (and Jesus') can only be understood as "an eschatological ethic," applicable only to the interim time.¹³

It is clear that Paul expects the parousia soon. In 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians Paul leaves the clear impression that only a minority of Christians will die before Christ returns. In 2 Corinthians and Philippians while Paul abandons the hope of personally living until the end, nevertheless he believes that the parousia is still "at hand" (Phil 4:5). One of the chief signs of the approaching parousia is the increasing power of evil, which is to continue to grow until it has reached a climax of intensity. Only then will God bring the former age to a complete end. Then God will re-establish complete sovereignty over evil, sin and death. God's will and purposes for creation will ultimately prevail.

While the new age is yet to be fully consummated, Paul understands that the new eon has also already arrived. The decisive eschatological event for all history, the death and resurrection of Christ, has already taken place. The Spirit which essentially belongs to the new

¹²Henry M. Shires, The Eschatology of Paul in the Light of Modern Scholarship (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 147.

¹³See Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus (London: Black, 1954) or Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950).

age, is already present and available to Christians. The power of the resurrection, unleashed in the resurrection of Christ, is now available and operative in the present age. Paul experiences himself as dying daily in terms of his pride (1 Cor 15:31) and his sufferings (2 Cor 4:7-12) and being resurrected daily (2 Cor 1:10; 4:16; Rom 6:5-11) by the same power that resurrected Christ. Further, each person as he/she makes a decision for faith is delivered from the old evil age to the new age (Gal 1:4). The eschatological-occurrence is in the present act of faith. Bultmann writes:

The salvation-occurrence is the eschatological occurrence which puts to end the old aeon. Though Paul still expects the end of the old world to come as a cosmic drama that will unfold. . .that can only be the completion and confirmation of the eschatological occurrence that has now already begun.¹⁴

The faithful already belong to the new age to come. The new creation, promised in its fulness at the end of time, has already come in Christ and to each Christian as he/she becomes "one with Christ" (2 Cor 5:17). Therefore for Paul the "day of salvation" is now as well as in the future (2 Cor 6:2). Writing of Paul's eschatology Hans Conzelmann says, ". . .the essential point is the bracketing of the future with the present, the indication that the future can be experienced now."¹⁵

When the parousia does come, Paul understands that there will be three events: the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the faithful and the last judgment. Concerning the judgment, Paul understands

¹⁴Bultmann, I, 306.

¹⁵Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 185.

that the God who created the world will in the end of time be the world's judge. He understands that all people will be judged: Christians and non-Christians alike (Rom 14:10). God's judgment will be based on what each person did in this life (2 Cor 5:10). Everyone will be judged according to his/her works or behavior (Rom 2:17-27; 2:6). God will also take into account the intentions of a person's behavior as well (Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 4:5). At this last judgment those who have been "one with Christ" in this life can be confident before the judgment seat of God. For them there will be no κατάκριμα ("condemnation"; Rom 8:1). For the unfaithful and non-believing there will be condemnation and the wrath of God (1 Thess 1:10), although Paul does not describe the exact character of that punishment.

Given the present age's unique polarity, judgment is not only to come at the parousia, but is also already present. Judgment is possible now because God's righteousness is rooted in the moral order of the world. The ungodly and wicked experience God's wrath now (Rom 1:18) as do the sexually immoral (Rom 1:27). In 1 Cor 11:27-33 Paul argues Christians bring judgment and even punishment on themselves by their divisive behavior. In 1 Thess 2:16 Paul speaks of the wrath of God already punishing the Jews in this life. Judgment seems to be built into the very nature of immoral and evil acts. All people judge themselves by their very acts and decisions. In this sense the Last Judgment is actually perfunctory, simply confirming what people have already "earned" for themselves in this life. The real arena for judgment is this present age.

This view corresponds to the understanding of judgment in the

Old Testament as well. The Old Testament prophets understood God to be judging Israel at every point in history, as well as forecasting an ultimate judgment at the end of history. Israel's experience with a continual judgment may form the backdrop for Paul's understanding of judgment. This view also allows for the approach developed later by Christian theology which suggested that each person's last judgment came at his/her death. There is some evidence for this point of view in Paul (Phil 1:19-26). This existential interpretation of eschatology opens up the possibility of seeing each "near-death" experience as eschatologically significant. No matter where the judgment is placed, whether at the end of time or in the present life, Paul affirms that the principle of judgment is universally valid (Gal 6:7). In his own words ὁ γὰρ ἐὰν σπεύρῃ ἄνθρωπος, τοῦτο καὶ θερίσει ("People [inevitably] reap what they sow").

Compared with traditional Jewish eschatology, Paul's eschatology embodies some significant changes. Traditional Jewish eschatology was global, almost cosmic in scope (Isaiah) and it was primarily future oriented. While these elements are there in Paul's thinking, he also conceives of eschatology in terms of the individual and in terms of the present. Thus eschatology which is usually concerned with the fate of races, nations and history is through Paul also applicable to the dynamics of the individual's personal growth and salvation experience. What are the dynamics of eschatological occurrences as they are experienced by the individual in this present time?

It has been noted from Paul's writings that eschatology inevitably involves an experience of judgment. There is judgment in the age

to come and there is also judgment built into the daily eschatological occurrences of this life. An experience of judgment can lead to repentance or to condemnation. A person might come to see the errors of his/her ways (self-judgment) and choose a new life based on faith and righteousness. Or a person might ignore the judgment dynamics and simply continue in the same destructive line of behavior, this leading to condemnation. As long as judgment occurs in this life, this side of the Last Judgment, it is "pen-ultimate." Judgment in this life leaves open the possibility of repentance. There is always time to start over again. Only the Last Judgment at the end of time (or a person's death) is "ultimate" and permanent in the sense of being without the possibility of repentance.¹⁶

One way to describe the experience of judgment built into the eschatological occurrences of this life is in terms of the dynamics of loss. When a person experiences loss there is an experience of judgment. As noted in earlier chapters, any severe loss usually motivates a person to evaluate the meaning of that which is lost and the meaning of his/her life without that which is lost. Often people make significant changes in their life-styles following a severe loss experience, precisely because the loss experience forced them to evaluate or judge themselves and their life up to that point. The loss of a loved one, the loss of one's own life, the loss of one's possession, status, health, etc., are all potential eschatological occurrences in the sense of

¹⁶This author realizes that this point is theologically debatable, but a further discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

reminding the participants of the shortness of time, and hence initiating an experience of judgment. Loss can also be anticipated. Paul frequently warns his readers of the coming parousia (1 Thess 4:6) in the hopes that the anticipated loss of life, etc., would initiate self-judgment and in turn repentance.¹⁷ Paul's personal conversion experience seems to have involved loss dynamics as well (Phil 3:7f.) although the sequence is less clear. Other kinds of events have their own built-in judgment according to Paul. Immorality, wickedness and corruption, can lead to a loss of friendship, joy, health, peace and eternal life. Awareness of these losses can also provoke self-judgment and hopefully repentance. The dynamics of loss, while not explicit in Paul, are nevertheless implicit and offer a helpful perspective on Paul's eschatology and the role of judgment therein. The way is now open for an analysis of the role of eschatology and judgment in the sanctification-growth process.

D. THE ROLE OF LOSS IN FACILITATING SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In chapter four it was clear that Paul's concept of $\theta\lambda\tau\psi\lambda\varsigma$ ("affliction") was the closest parallel to a theological understanding of loss. All afflictions, whether death, suffering, persecutions or other hardships, carry the common element of loss. As such, Paul argued that loss was an inevitable part of this eschatological age, dominated as still it is by the power of sin and death. Only in the Messianic age

¹⁷It is interesting how many of the synoptic parables involve judgment and loss: Parable of Rich Fool (Lk 12:13-21), Parable about the Lost (Lk 15:1-32), The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31). Particularly in the latter parable, the rich man's judgment occurs in fully realizing what he lost.

to come will all loss and sorrow be vanquished.

Besides the inevitable sufferings of living in this age, Paul understands his own special afflictions as an inevitable part of his apostolic office. His afflictions are vicarious in nature, serving the purpose of advancing the spread of the Gospel (Phil 1:12). By so suffering in this way, Paul understood that he was being like Christ, who also suffered vicariously on behalf of others. Paul felt that through his sufferings he was participating in and continuing Christ's sufferings and thereby being one with him (Phil 3:10-11). Further, he advised other Christians to adopt the same "suffering service" model (Phil 1:29-30). "Suffering for others" was the normative Christian life-style, initially established by Christ's own life and death, and continued in Paul's own ministry. In this regard (as in so many other things as well), Paul advises his readers to *μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, καθὼς καὶ ἡ Χριστοῦ* ("Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ"; 1 Cor 11:1).

Earlier in this chapter sanctification or spiritual growth was described as a process of becoming "like Christ." The desire to imitate Christ in all things is a pervasive theme in Paul's writings (Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6; Gal 4:12; 1 Cor 4:16), as it has been throughout the history of the Church. By suffering as Christ suffered, Paul understands that he is becoming like Christ. There, suffering particularly suffering on behalf of others, is one way of facilitating the sanctification process, that is, "growing into the likeness of Christ." To the extent that loss is present in suffering, it can also be suggested that Paul understands loss, particularly on behalf of others, as facilitating sanctification.

The role of suffering or loss in promoting sanctification,

however, is deeper and more complex than just a simple "copying" of Christ's behavior. For Paul, such suffering works to keep him weak and dependent on God and therefore not on himself. Suffering helps him resist his tendency to boast of and take pride in his own efforts. Thus, in Paul, suffering helps strengthen the virtues of humility and self-sacrifice, which at a deeper level, is also growing into the likeness of Christ. The real growth-intention behind suffering is not just a simple imitating of Christ's sufferings, but a desire to develop deeper Christ-like virtues of humility and self-sacrifice, virtues that suffering and loss tend to foster. So for Paul afflictions can facilitate spiritual growth on the simple level of continuing Christ's suffering service model and on a deeper level by fostering Christ-like virtues.

Paul is so convinced of the growth-promoting value of suffering that he welcomes and at times even rejoices in his sufferings (Rom 5:30). Thus, Paul is vulnerable to the charge of masochism and intentional martyrdom, and, if true, he ceases to be a model of psychological-spiritual health. It must be remembered, however, that Paul did not seek suffering for suffering's sake, but sought first the service of others which brought with it suffering.¹⁸ Suffering was never an end in itself, but a tool to another greater end. For Paul some of those "greater ends" were: the Gospel's advancement (Phil 1:12), the comfort of others (2 Cor 1:3-7), the upbuilding of faith and character (Rom 5:3-5), and the manifestation of God's power (2 Cor 12:9-10). Even though

¹⁸This view represents the subtle distinction between martyrdom and suicide or masochism. The martyr seeks primarily the cause, not the suffering, whereas the suicide/masochist seeks suffering for suffering's sake.

Paul at times welcomes suffering, this author does not believe that he can be labeled masochistic or suicidal, because his primary motivation was always not suffering per se, but personal and communal growth.

There is a second line of argument in Paul's writings concerning the role of loss in spiritual growth. This argument focuses on the process of spiritual growth. Paul uses three images to describe the process of spiritually growing through afflictions. Often Paul likens the experience of suffering and loss to Christ's death (Gal 2:20). Paul sees his sufferings as "a dying with Christ" (Rom 6:6; 2 Cor 4:11), and his deliverance from death as a resurrection experience (2 Cor 1:8-11; Phil 3:10-11). Similarly, Paul uses the images of loss and gain to describe the same process. He felt that he personally had to lose all of his Jewish credentials in order to gain Christ (Phil 3:5-8). One must lose in order to gain just like one must die in order to rise to new life. Thirdly, Paul uses the imagery of weakness and strength. Paul understands that by being weak, he is strong (2 Cor 12:10). For Paul weakness refers to bodily vulnerability (2 Cor 4:7), the lack of eloquent speech (1 Cor 2:3), his human vulnerability to hardship, disease and calamities (2 Cor 12:10), an anti-boastful attitude (2 Cor 12:1-10). By being weak, it is clear that the Gospel's acceptance and advancement is not due to Paul, but to God's power (2 Cor 4:7ff.). This power to bring strength out of weakness is the same resurrection power of God that brings new life out of death, and gain out of loss. It seems clear that all three images refer to the same dynamic growth process, a growth process that involves loss.

Regardless of which image Paul uses, the dying-rising (weakness-

strength, losing-gaining) pattern seems clear. This pattern was established by Christ, who gave up all (Phil 2:5-11) and gained salvation for humanity and glorification for himself. This pattern was personally experienced by Paul over and over again, both in the growth of the Gospel (Phil 1:12) and in his own spiritual growth (Phil 3:7; Gal 5:24). Behind this growth principle lies the resurrection power of God, who raised Christ from the dead and continually raises Paul to new life. Thus, Paul can give "himself up constantly to hardships and sufferings, and glorify in his weakness, on the assumption that the God who raises the dead is at work in his weakness."¹⁹ This conviction is not based primarily on theological abstracts or philosophical logic, but on personal experience. "The basic miracle of Paul's life," writes James Robinson, "is that although he runs every risk without self-serving precautions, he is sustained."²⁰ This is Paul's proof of the existence of God, based not on the abstractions of logic, but on the experiences of a life lived in faith.

Paul uses this dying-rising pattern to describe the growth of the Gospel, his personal encounters with hardships or persecutions or as an image for Baptism. The pattern is equally applicable however, to personal spiritual growth (Gal 5:24; Rom 6:6). The central point of this growth principle is that growth (however defined) comes from a periodical "letting go" or losing. Conversely, spiritual growth is not

¹⁹James M. Robinson, "The Theology of Paul" (Unpublished introductory course given in winter quarter of 1956 at Candler School of Theology and Columbia Theological Seminary), p. 76

²⁰Ibid.

fostered by an intentional reliance on one's own efforts. For Paul spiritual growth is a cyclic process. New advances only follow periods of dying (losing, or weakening). One almost gets the impression that for Paul dying or losing are necessary in order to rise or to gain. This last point needs some further examination.

It is important to remember that for Paul Christ did not give up everything (Phil 2) in order to gain. If that was Christ's motivation, he would have been essentially self-serving. Rather, Paul makes it clear that Christ gave up everything simply out of obedience to God's will (v. 8). Then in response to that obedience, God raised Jesus to new life. The same point is made by Paul in the example of Abraham (Rom 4; Gal 3), who did not believe in order to gain God's blessing, but obeyed simply out of faith, to which God graciously responded. Similarly, in terms of sanctification, Paul would suggest that a Christian does not "lose" in order to gain, but loses out of simple obedience and trust in God. God then responds to that act of trustful obedience by "rising" out of that loss event new spiritual growth. In this way spiritual growth is essentially a gift of God's grace and not exclusively a product of one's own efforts.²¹

Paul has described the dynamics of spiritual growth as a cyclic process of dying and rising (losing/gaining, and weakness/strength). In a second way then, Paul understands that loss plays an important, in fact a necessary role in facilitating sanctification. Loss, whether

²¹This understanding of the dynamics of growth leaves open an important role for faith in the growing process. More will be said on this later.

externally caused or voluntarily initiated, brings with it a "self-surrendering," or a "giving up" dynamic that then sets the stage for God's free gift of growth. For Paul loss is not only an opportunity, but in a certain sense also a prerequisite for spiritual growth.

There is still however a third line of argument in Paul's writings concerning the role of loss in spiritual growth. As noted earlier in this chapter, all loss experiences initiate a period of self-judgment in which the participants evaluate the meaning of that which is lost and their life without that which is lost. This is so theologically, because loss experiences are essentially eschatological occurrences, vividly reminding the participants of the shortness of time. Such periods of self-judgment often result in repentance and/or self-correction. For Paul judgment is an effective tool for promoting spiritual growth. Since judgment is often initiated by a loss experience (its eschatological nature), it can be reasonably argued for Pauline materials that a loss experience can be an opportunity for spiritual growth.

For Paul judgment can take many forms and designs. Ultimately God alone judges all people. Paul frequently advises his readers that judgment belongs to God alone (1 Cor 4:1-5; 1 Thess 4:6). When Christians judge others, they are condemning themselves (Rom 2:1) and risking a more severe judgment from God (Rom 2:1-4). In other passages, however, Paul speaks of judgment of the church as a "necessary evil." When Paul hears of the immorality of a Corinthian Christian, for example, he advises the Corinthian church (1 Cor 5:9-13) to pass judgment upon this person by driving him/her out of the Church. There Paul makes a distinction which he repeats in Romans, that God alone judges those outside of

the church, but inside the church, the church leaders (including himself) can pass judgment on their own.

It seems clear that for Paul judgment can be an effective spiritual growth tool. This is true in terms of God's judgment as well as the use of judgment by the church. Theologically, Paul understands God's judgment as a function of God's love. God desires to punish or eternally damn no one. God desires to see all people saved and in proper relationship with Christ. The purpose of God's judgment, at least this side of the Last Judgment, is to bring about self-judgment and repentance. In 1 Cor 11:32, Paul suggests that when Christians are judged by the Lord, they are παιδεύμεθα ("instructed" or "disciplined") ἵνα ("in order that") they may not be κατακριθῶμεν ("condemned"). The purpose of God's judgment, at least to the extent that it is built into this present age, is instruction or discipline. God's purpose in judgment is repentance.

The same general understanding of judgment is made by Paul (1 Cor 3:10-15) when he speaks of the foundations laid by each of the apostles. He notes that on the (Last) "Day" each foundation (church) will be tested by fire (which is an image for judgment). Those workers whose foundation survives will be rewarded, while those workers whose foundation is destroyed will lose, but they themselves will still be saved. Judgment is not the same as punishment. All Christians and even the Apostles, will be judged by God, but not necessarily punished or condemned (Rom 8:1). Judgment is meant to test or evaluate each person's work and character, just as fire tests the strength and worth of metals. Judgment's purpose is to reveal the truth, and thereby evaluate, so that self-correction and/or repentance can be initiated while there is still time.

A similar understanding of judgment as a tool of spiritual growth is implied in the church's use of judgment advised by Paul in 1 Cor 5. Upon hearing of the immorality of a Corinthian Christian, Paul freely pronounces judgment "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (v. 4) and advises the Corinthian Church to do likewise and also punish this individual by driving him/her out of the church. Paul suggests several arguments for why judgment is necessary in this case (vss. 6-13), in contrast to his usual advice which is to avoid judgment (Rom 14:13). He suggests that it is permissible for the church to judge those inside the church, while leaving those outside the church to God's judgment. The implication here is that judgment can be an effective tool for spiritual growth for those inside the church. Judgment can be used to assist Christians to periodically evaluate their lives and faith, in hopes that this self-judgment will lead to greater spiritual growth. Judgment, whether initiated by the church, by the nature of the misdeeds themselves, or by a loss/death experience, leads to self-judgment in the individuals and the possibility of self-corrective action.²² In this way, judgment can be a helpful tool for maintaining and promoting sanctification.

In this section, it has been argued that Paul understands loss as an opportunity and even in one sense as a necessary prerequisite to spiritual growth. Paul believes this because: 1) suffering and loss

²²I believe this is what Paul means in the difficult verse 2 Cor 7:10, where he distinguishes between "godly grief" which leads to repentance and "worldly grief" which leads to death. Besides the issue of whether he meant grief or guilt, Paul has accurately described the process: his letter initiated feelings of grief and guilt, in the Corinthians, followed by a period of self-judgment, which in turn led to repentance. The point seems clear: judgment can lead to repentance.

tend to promote Christ-like virtues; 2) intentional loss or self-surrender is an important prerequisite to spiritual growth; and 3) loss experiences often involve judgment which Paul understands to be an effective tool of spiritual growth. While all of these reasons are valid, it should be noted that none of these reasons has to do specifically with grief, which is the major focus of this dissertation. Nevertheless, Paul's insights are helpful, and this author believes will ultimately contribute to a clarification of the interrelationship of loss and growth.

E. AVENUES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Questions remain concerning the exact nature of spiritual growth. How do people grow spiritually? What is it that grows when a person grows spiritually? When crisis/loss occurs what are the avenues along which people grow spiritually?

Sanctification or spiritual growth has already been defined as "growing into the likeness of Christ." Earlier it was noted that this definition suggests a multi-dimensional process, including at least a cognitive, emotional and ethical dimension. Becoming like Christ means becoming like Him in one's thoughts, one's attitudes, one's emotions, one's values and so on. Spiritual growth, as so defined, is a very complex process.

A closer examination of Paul's writings offer some additional suggestions and clues concerning how Paul understands the spiritual growth process. This author has isolated five avenues or dimensions along which people grow spiritually in the midst of a loss.

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Loss is Imitating Christ

When a Christian loses, especially when that loss is on behalf of others, he/she is literally imitating Christ's example of suffering service. For Paul, Christ established this pattern in His advent, death and resurrection and this pattern is normative for all Christians. Paul describes (Phil 2:5-11) in creedal form this normative pattern. He suggests that this pattern should be normative for all Christians by saying τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ("Keep in mind this [attitude] among yourselves which is also in Christ Jesus. . . .") The content of that example suggest several images of loss. He ἐκένωσεν ("emptied himself"). He γενόμενος ὑπήκος μέχρι θανάτου ("became obedient to the point of death"). Paul understands that Christ voluntarily became human, served others, and even died—all on behalf of others. These losses Christ voluntarily and intentionally undertook on behalf of others.

Paul also understands his own pilgrimage of faith as a continual giving up or losing followed by gain. In particular Paul understands his conversion experience as a loss experience. He gave up all—all of his Jewish credentials (Phil 3:4-10). At that time there was no intention of losing on behalf of others, but later in retrospect, he understands these events as occurring so that he can be an apostle to the Gentiles.

As has been noted earlier, the imitation of Christ is a frequent theme and guiding moral imperative for Paul. It is also literally the definition of sanctification or spiritual growth as proposed in this

dissertation. Therefore, loss when voluntarily taken on behalf of others, is in itself one avenue of spiritual growth. This viewpoint can be and is often expanded in Paul to include unwelcomed and unintentional losses as well. It then becomes a form of consolation: "Be comforted, because in suffering you are becoming like Christ." Paul believes that as he shares in Christ's sufferings, he not only is becoming "like Him," but also will share in Christ's resurrection as well. In this conviction Paul finds great comfort and hope.

Loss Builds Character

Loss builds character, faith and hope: besides the literal imitation of Christ's pattern of suffering service, loss and similar afflictions also build character, faith and hope which in return is also becoming "like Christ." Paul suggests (Rom 5:3-4) that Christians can actually rejoice in afflictions because it has been his experience that afflictions produce endurance, and endurance produces character (δοκιμήν), and character produces hope. While the inner dynamics of this process are not entirely clear, the sequence does imply a growth process initiated by a loss event. Affliction can be the catalyst that enables a person to strengthen his/her patient endurance, character or worth, and hope. Therefore, Paul frequently advises Christians who are amid crisis and affliction to "be patient" (Rom 8:25) or "Be steadfast, immovable" (1 Cor 15:58) or "do not lose heart" (2 Cor 5:6; 4:1). Paul wants each Christian to learn like he has, "to be content in whatever state I am" (Phil 4:11).

Paul's own personal experience is that afflictions/losses have

strengthened his trust and dependency on God. He understands that his σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί ("thorn in the flesh") was given to him to keep him weak, because when he is weak God's power is all the more evident in him (2 Cor 12:1-10). He generalizes from his personal handicap to all afflictions and hardships. Loss is given to him so that the power of God might be more evident (see 2 Cor 4:7). With every loss, affliction or hardship, Paul must rely on God's resurrection power and not on his own efforts. Loss continually reminds Paul that he is not self-sufficient. He must continually surrender his self-sufficiency to God's grace. In this way repeated loss and affliction give Paul repeated opportunities to strengthen his trust, dependency and faith in God.

Paul makes a similar but less pervasive argument concerning hope. Paul suggests (2 Cor 4:17) that the present afflictions are παρ-αυτίκα ἐλαφρόν ("slight and momentary") when compared to the eternal glory of the life to come. A similar point is made in Rom 8:18 where he again compares these present sufferings to the glory of the age to come. The argument in part suggests, especially in 2 Cor 4:17f., that suffering increases one's hope and anticipation of the life to come. By sorrowing now, one appreciates all the more the joy that is to come. True hope which for Paul is a hope in things unseen (2 Cor 4:18; Rom 8:24-25) is actually strengthened in suffering. In the midst of suffering and sorrow, one comes to hope for the new age all the more (and in addition one is likely to be motivated to do more to prepare for the new age).

To Paul's mind affliction can be an effective catalyst toward strengthening one's character, patience, faith and hope. The increase

and strengthening of such virtues is becoming "like Christ" and represents another avenue of spiritual growth in times of loss. So confident is Paul of the growth-producing qualities of afflictions/losses that he can claim as he often does to "rejoice in our sufferings" (Rom 5:4).

Loss Initiates New Theological Understandings

Amid suffering, hardships, or severe loss experiences, people inevitably ask why—why has this happened to me? What is the meaning or purpose of this experience? Theologically, these questions focus on the issues of evil, suffering and the nature of God. Hopefully, these crises of meaning will initiate new insights concerning the nature of suffering and the nature of God, insights that will strengthen one's belief system. At several points in Paul's letters, usually following a loss/affliction experience, Paul reflects theologically upon the purpose of suffering and loss. In this way he illustrates the crisis of meaning that accompanies severe loss experiences. His letters represent the end-product of that reflection process. It should not be forgotten that behind each conclusion lies a spiritual growth process initiated by a loss/affliction event.

In 2 Cor 12:1-10 Paul recounts the story of his own personal struggles with his handicap, which he refers to as a σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί ("thorn in the flesh"). Apparently, he struggled with his handicap for some time, asking the Lord to remove it on three separate occasions (v. 8). Eventually Paul came to understand that the purpose of his "thorn" was to maintain his weakness so that God's power would be all the more evident in him and his work. Later this personal experience translated

into a general theological principle of the interrelationship of God and humans (2 Cor 4:7). Then in Phil 1:12ff. Paul struggles with the meaning of his afflictions, in particular his recent imprisonment. He concludes that what has happened to him has served to advance the Gospel, in particular to the Praetorian guard, and has also served to make other Christian preachers even more confident in their preaching of the Gospel. In 2 Cor 1:3-7 Paul again reflects upon a recent severe episode of persecution. Again behind the scenes he probably asked himself the question: why? This time he tells the Corinthians that these afflictions occurred for the purpose of "your comfort" and "your salvation." Somehow these afflictions have given the Corinthians new confidence and new concern for Paul, and has thereby served to strengthen and increase their faith. Behind each of these three passages Paul asked the theological question, "why?" and each time he arrived at a slightly different conclusion. Each time a severe loss/affliction experience initiated a new struggle with the theological issue of suffering, concluding in new insights that strengthen his belief system and those of his followers.

Crises of meaning brought on by severe loss or affliction experiences also raise theological questions concerning the nature of God. It is surprising how little Paul has to say about the nature of God per se. He is not primarily a speculative theologian. He is concerned with God only as God is concerned with humans. As Bultmann suggests, Paul's anthropology, his doctrine of human nature, is at the same time his theology.²³ Nevertheless a few clues about Paul's understanding of God

²³Bultmann, I, 191.

can be found in his literature. At times it can be also suggested that changes in Paul's understanding of God might have grown out of severe experiences of loss or affliction.

In Rom 8:23 Paul makes an amazing and bold statement: οὐδὲν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν ("We know that for those who love God, everything works for good. . . ."). This statement suggests an understanding of God that is unique, especially in contrast to certain Old Testament images. God is not the judge who authors afflictions and losses, but the ever-present spirit who actively works for good even amid tragedy. This author believes that this understanding of God, which is so different from portions of Paul's Jewish heritage, grew out of Paul's experiences of loss, affliction and tragedy. The plural pronoun ("we") implies for example that this conviction grew out of their common experience together. Paul's proof or evidence is not the kerygma, the scripture, or the Lord, but their own personal knowledge ("we know"). The entire passage in which this verse occurs is devoted to a discussion of sufferings and losses (Rom 8:18). This author believes that this view of God embodied in this verse, was born out of Paul's experiences of loss and affliction.

Another understanding of God is found in 2 Cor 1:3-11 which is also a passage concerned with the nature of suffering and affliction. Here Paul refers to God as a "God of all comforts" and writes deeply of how he experienced God's comfort during his recent times of affliction. Through these affliction experiences, he has obtained a clear vision of God as a God of comfort. God is not "above it all" dispassionately observing Paul's plight, but involved in the pain, anguish and sorrow of

Paul's life, comforting and caring for him even amid crisis. It is not possible to say if this vision of God is new to Paul. It is certainly different from certain portions of the Old Testament and Greek philosophical traditions. At the very least, it could be suggested that Paul's experience of affliction and loss makes this vision of God clearer, if not totally new.

When loss and affliction occurs, one of the avenues of spiritual growth is the avenue of cognitive growth, that is, the growth of one's meaning or belief system. At several points Paul illustrates how such experiences initiated new spiritual struggles, and eventually new theological insights about the purpose of suffering/loss and the nature of God.

Loss Increases Attitudes of Sympathy and Compassion

When one suffers a loss or similar affliction, he/she understands the deep pain and sorrow that such tragedies can bring. Such a full empathetic understanding of one's own pain often makes that person thereafter more sympathetic to the needs of others who are going through similar experiences. Thus the bonds of friendship and love can grow stronger in times of crisis, hardship and loss. People who have been through similar circumstances reach out to others in gestures of compassion, sympathy and concern. Thus loss experiences can help create in people stronger attitudes of love and compassion both during the tragedies and hopefully continuing afterwards as well. Strengthening one's attitude of love and compassion is also an avenue of spiritual growth. The more loving and compassionate people are, the more they are becoming "like

Christ."

This theme is found in many, scattered places in Paul's writings. He seems to be keenly aware of the support and sympathy of Christians for one another in times of crisis. While Paul is imprisoned, he "yearns" for the friendship and companionship of the Philippians (Phil 1:8). Likewise, the Philippians are more deeply concerned for Paul during this period (Phil 4:10,14,16). Similarly with the Corinthian church, Paul expresses his conviction that he and the Corinthians share in each other's afflictions and therefore comfort each other (2 Cor 1:3-7). Paul envisions a "triangle of comfort." God's comfort comforts Paul and Paul comforts the Corinthians with that same comfort. In return, they are comforted by God, and also extend that same comfort to Paul. A similar situation exists with the Thessalonian church when Paul is comforted by hearing of the Thessalonians' faith and love (1 Thess 3:7-8). Throughout Paul's letters, he continually advises his readers to love one another, to be compassionate and to do this especially in times of crisis and affliction. In times of grief and sorrow, for example, he advises the Thessalonians to "comfort one another" (1 Thess 4:18) and the Romans to "weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15b).

Underlying this expression of sympathy and compassion in times of need, are two theological convictions. First, there is Paul's concept of the church as the body of Christ (see 1 Cor 12ff.). "We are members of one another" and as such, when "one suffers, all suffer" (1 Cor 12:26). This interdependence of one another in the body of Christ is a fact for Paul. Thus feelings of compassion and love for one another in times of crisis are very natural and almost necessary.

In return, however, these very gestures of compassion and love reinforce and strengthen the "oneness" that Christians feel as members of Christ's body.

Secondly, Paul understands that an attitude of love and compassion is in itself "being like Christ," who was the model of love and compassion both in his life and in his sacrificial death on the cross. The great hymn of love (1 Cor 13f.), while lacking in any direct Christology, does set the standard of love and implies that the nature of true love is best understood in God's redemptive act in Jesus Christ. Paul further understands that loving one another is fulfilling the law of Christ (Rom 13:8, 10; Gal 6:2), if not the example of Christ. Other sections of ethical imperatives, like Rom 12:9-21, echo Jesus' own commandments regarding love. For Paul then increasing one's love, compassion and sympathy are certainly another avenue of spiritual growth, another avenue of becoming "like Christ." Also for Paul experiences of loss and tragedy actually seem to stimulate and strengthen the bonds and gestures of love and compassion between Christians.

Loss Transforms Values

Earlier in this chapter it was argued that eschatology transforms values and priorities. This transformation is seen clearly in several places in Paul's writings. His ethical imperatives in Rom 12ff. can be understood as "interim ethics" applicable only in the interim time right before the entrance of the new age. Similarly, in Corinthians Paul's advice concerning marriage, slavery and even circumcision is conditioned by his conviction that the new age is imminent (1 Cor 7:17-38).

His principle is that everyone should "remain in the state in which you were called" (v. 20). It may be argued that his advice is therefore applicable only to the interim period between the two ages. Eschatology has transformed the "normal" values and priorities into a value system which is reversed from the usual "order of the day." Christians who live on a permanent basis by this new order live always "as if" the Kingdom of God was about to break into history.

It was also argued earlier in this chapter that every loss experience in life is an "eschatological occurrence," a moment in which one is aware of the shortness of time, and a moment therefore full of judgment. Thus it could be argued that to the extent that loss and affliction experiences are indeed eschatological occurrences, they have a tendency to transform values and priorities. This insight can only be indirectly illustrated from Paul's writings. For example, in Phil 1:19-26 Paul is reflecting upon the meaning of his imprisonment and possible death. As a part of that reflection, he considers a revision of his values and priorities, even to the extent of considering suicide itself. When the time is short, either cosmically or personally, one's normal values and priorities are dwarfed by the urgency of new, immediate concerns. The values and pursuits that previously seemed so important mean little in the face of death. Thus, loss experiences, because of their eschatological nature, can initiate a transformation of values, and if that transformation of values is toward Christ's ethical system (as this author believes it will be most of the time), then it can be said that a person is becoming "like Christ."

F. A CLINICAL INTERLUDE: A GRIEF GROWTH GROUP

Several years ago when this author was serving as a parish minister, he had an opportunity to help create an organization for widowed people called TLA ("To Live Again"). As a part of that organization's program, he periodically led grief growth groups for recently widowed people.²⁴ Out of two of these early group experiences came the guiding vision and leadership for TLA. Approximately one year after he had left the area to enter graduate studies, he had an opportunity to interview those original twelve group members. They talked together for nearly five hours without interruption. The atmosphere was warm, vibrant, and at times electric. The conversation focused on how each person had changed and grown since our original group experience and since the death of his/her spouse some time earlier. Following are excerpts from that interview which are offered here as clinical illustrations of some of the dynamics of spiritual growth discussed in this chapter.²⁵

Leader: As you look back on our common group experience some year and a half ago, how did or didn't the group help you with your grief? Can you give me some ideas?

Shirley: We couldn't have made it without it, right? (all agree)

Nancy: Yes, indeed. I don't know what I could have done without this group (all have remained friends since then).

Leader: What precisely was helpful about the group.

Bob: You really forced us to open up and share our hurt. Previously

²⁴All of the group members (except one) were between ages 30-50. All (except one) had lost their spouse on an average of six months prior to the start of the group. Most had moderate religious orientation. There were ten women, two men. Eight were Catholics, four Protestants.

²⁵All names and identifying data have been altered to protect confidentiality. The verbatims have been reconstructed from tapes and notes, but edited for the sake of clarity and brevity.

I have been hiding my pain, running from it. I was running away from everything, including myself. I ran to work ran through work, ran home, ran through the house. You really forced us, at least me, to face it and talk about it.

Leader: It?

Bob: You know (laughter). Marge's suicide. I had to look at it face to face and accept it for what it was. And I had to look at me, face to face. It hurt, you know how it hurt, but it was worth it. And the group was there to listen and care for me.

Joan: As for me, it made me feel less different from the world. It forced me to open up and share my feelings, and learn to trust others. It also added a definite perspective to my life; suddenly my experience didn't seem like the worst. In some aspects of my life I was decidedly better off than some of the other group members. Also, I had to face the reality that I wasn't coping all that well on my own. I came to admit that I needed friends.

Leader: Don't we all. You all have seemed to continue to be good friends.

Nancy: This is a great bunch of people (all agree).

Shirley: We've stuck together through thick and thin, mostly the thin (laughter).

Ann: That's what I have appreciated most in all of you . . . is the way that your love has extended beyond just one meeting a week. I know that I could call any one of you at any time, day or night (and often did) to talk things out. Joan, you and I must have spent a thousand hours on the phone together that first year. . . .

Joan: At least five thousand hours. . . .

Ann (continuing): . . . discussing the loneliness, and our problems with the kids, and David. I couldn't have done it without you.

Joan: Me, either.

Shirley: I have experienced that, too. It seemed like the friendships here are deeper than the friends that I use to have before John died. We really know each other and talk without all of the masks. All of my other friends that John and I both had before he died, seem so superficial now, so shallow. We'd chit-chat over coffee and talk about newsy stuff, like recipes. children, you know gossip type stuff. But when we get together, we really share deeply.

Leader: Funny isn't it how those "other" friends have faded away.

Shirley: Yes, good riddance.

Leader: Do you all think that friendship is the key then to recovery?

Ann: I feel sorry for the people who live alone in their grief, who can't. . . .

Shirley: Or won't. . . .

Ann (continuing): Come out to a meeting (TLA). They just want to wallow in self-pity and grief. They got all caught up in work or the children, kind of like what you were saying Bob,

"running from it."

Bob: No. It's more than friends. It's love. I mean, it's honesty. It's really being where you are . . . and that wasn't easy! Putting aside all the masks and phony images of self-sufficiency.

Leader: Maybe, it's honesty and love.

Leader (later): You know, you folks really love each other don't you? (embarrassment but agreement). It's a beautiful thing to share. I hope you've been able to recreate it in your own groups (several lead groups now).

Ann: We try.

Bob: You're beautiful too (to leader). Thank you for giving so much to us, when our normal ministers couldn't be bothered.

Leader: You're welcome (leads into a group hug).

This excerpt illustrates the deep sense of community and mutual love that these people came to experience together. This community grew out of a process of self-revelation that was deeper and more profound than ordinary conversation. Since their conversation focused on the deepest feelings of pain and anguish, feelings not usually shared in ordinary conversation, the bonds of friendship and love between them also reached to the centers of their lives.

This community grew out of their common tragedy. These people did not even know each other prior to their loss. They were originally brought together out of their common need. They seek out new members and add to their community on the basis of their same need. Apparently, the group experience also facilitated the community building process. The gentle and skilled application of the growth formula ("It's honesty and love") by the leader, enabled several people to express their pain in an atmosphere of trust and confidence.

Theologically, this experience is the experience of koinonia. Building koinonia and building attitudes of love is one aspect of becoming like Christ that Paul describes. In this case, the spiritual

growth process was born in the tragedy of loss. This illustrates

Paul's conviction that community and caring can grow in times of loss.

Leader (later): How have you grown since the death of your spouse?

Joan: Oh, that's a big question. It's been incredible; I think I have changed more than anyone else in the group. Even though I am a professional occupational therapist, I had a low self-image. I never related well in a group, always feeling that what I had to say would be dumb or boring, and not nearly so important as someone else's comments. I never really trusted people except in a one-to-one relationship where I would share myself more comfortably.

Leader: And now?

Joan: Now I am very happy with and proud of myself. I am much more open and caring with people I have just met. I feel that this me was there all along; it was just locked up, and now is unleashed.

Leader: You and Ann are leading a group?

Joan: Yes, Ann and I are leading a discussion group on the grief cycle. I am also in charge of the TLA office and telephone. I take the initiative and call many widowed people just to let them know somebody cares. I got elected to my parish council (Catholic). And I am a full-time mommy.

Leader: Ann?

Ann: Well, I would say I've just grown up alot. I was such a dependent, helpless creature when Mickey died. I disguised myself. (pause) Since his death, I've got back to work . . . I pretty well had to. I hated it at first, but I came to like it, in fact, really enjoy it at times. I have all kinds of confidence now. I can make speeches in public about TLA and make big decisions about the kids without being wishy-washy.

Leader: You've got six kids, right?

Ann: Yes, five of them are now teenagers.

Leader: You do have your hands full.

Ann: We've had some problems with the kids, right Joan? (Joan agrees) Melvin has been arrested twice for drugs and Melodie is really bad in school. I think she isn't going to graduate. I feel so bad at times, for them . . . having no father. . . .

Leader: But?

Ann: Well, but I am not going to rush out and get married just so they can have a father and more things. I like myself too much now (praise from group). I'd rather be a little poorer, and on my own. We'll manage.

Leader: I believe you will. Priscella, how about you?

Priscella: Well, I think I've finally buried Henry. It took me a long time, as you know. I just could not let him go, but last month on our 18th wedding anniversary I was in church, and all of a sudden for no reason I started bawling (Henry's funeral was in the church). Boy, did I cry. I couldn't stop myself. I had to leave church. Father was giving me dirty looks. I

was so embarrassed, I haven't been back since.

Leader: You sound like you still have some grief work to do, especially on allowing yourself to cry.

Priscella: I know. Everyone here tells me that too. I did not cry for six months after Henry died. I kept handling it on an intellectual level--"He's dead; I must accept it and go on; I will not fall apart and be dependent on any one again."

Leader: And now, you're beginning to let the hurt out?

Priscella: It's sort of like you said once, "delayed grief;" like I am just now beginning to grieve (supported by group).

Bob: Remember our motto: "The only way out, is through!"

Dan (later): I think the biggest growth area for me is in the area of priorities. Before Jane died, I spent so much time working, rushing here and there. It seemed to be so important to make an extra buck, and get another account closed. Then when Jane died, I was shattered. My whole life was turned. . . .

Bob: Upside down?

Dan (continuing): I looked at my four sons and began to cry, not for Jane or for them but for me--for the time we wasted together. I try and spend more time with them now, especially on weekends. We're all we got for each other.

Nancy: I can identify with that. Before Ted's death, I use to get so worked up over small things; now they don't seem to matter much (begins to laugh in anticipation). I am always telling the story of my basement. It flooded last month, and my mother is running around in a panic, calling this guy, and doing that. That was the way that I use to be, but now I can't get worked up over such things any more. They don't matter. Who cares? It'll dry out. My mother can't believe the change in me. The important thing to me is my family, taking time every day to spend time with them.

Shirley: We take time now, whereas none of us did before. The most important thing is to enjoy today. Today is everything. Tomorrow . . . well, tomorrow is always an unknown.

Bob: I would describe it as being glad I'm alive. Really appreciative of each day, looking for ways to make it special.

Shirley: I'd rather be with people I love, really caring, taking the masks off--that's what matters to me. It's too bad that I didn't see that sooner, like before John died.

Most of these people can recount many ways in which they have grown as a result of their loss and grief. Most of these personal growth advances are not necessarily spiritual, although each would have spiritual dimensions. Obviously, people who have not grown are not at this meeting (which is partly why they have not grown), although Priscella is still in the throws of a contaminated and delayed grief reaction.

The latter third of this excerpt, however, concerning priorities and values does illustrate one avenue of spiritual growth that Paul talked about: the revolution of values. Severe loss experiences are "eschatological occurrences" in the sense of making their participants aware of the shortness of time. So vivid is this awareness to these people that most of them have completely reversed their "ordinary" value hierarchy. This is an example of how the judgment dimension to all loss experiences leads to spiritual growth. In all of their cases their new values were more humane. Conceivably, a person could also adopt a more materialistic orientation, deciding to get all that he/she could, before "the end."²⁶ In either case the sense of urgency that revolutes values was born in a loss experience. Again, this illustrates one avenue of spiritual growth that is initiated by loss.

Leader (later): What other changes have occurred since the deaths of your spouses?

Shirley: The biggest changes have been in TLA itself. We are over six hundred strong now with chapters in Delaware County, Philadelphia and Berks County. Can you believe that? (digression on TLA's growth).

Leader: Each of you is personally in some kind of leadership role.

Ann: This has been an important thing for me. TLA has given me a place to call home, something to take up my time, and give me new hope.

Leader: Why have most of you gotten so active in leadership roles?

Shirley: We believe in TLA. We experienced what a difference it made in our lives; we wanted to help others to grow too; to really show people out there that there are people who care.

Grace: I would say that it's given me a place to be needed. I really missed that when my Johnny died. He needed me and then when the kids began to go their own way, they didn't need me anymore either. But TLA did.

Leader: Each of you is active in some way. Would you say that

²⁶It would make an interesting study. All of my experience with people in eschatological situations is that their values become more humanistic. Paul and Jesus suggest and preach as much.

being active is helpful to widowed people.

Bob: To an extent. You can run away in activity, too, you know.

Dan: But I think it's important. It's given me a new direction.

Leader: Like a new purpose in life?

Joan: Yes, but it's been a social outlet for me too. That's also important.

Leader: I would suspect too that being involved in the hurt of other people has kept you honest with your own hurt.

Nancy: Yes, I always learn something from every new person I talk to.

Ann: When a new person first tells her story, you hurt all over again, just like it was you.

Leader: Does it ever end, the grief? Does it ever stop?

All: No (all agree).

Shirley: I don't think I'll ever get over it, but I have learned to live with it.

Leader: So you folks still hurt, ugh? I thought leaders are supposed to have it all together (laughter).

Bob: Right! Just like ministers are always perfectly practicing what they preach!!

Leader: Touche!

For each of these people, TLA has given them more than just a place to grieve and a social outlet, however important these things are. TLA has also given them a sense of purpose and meaning. For some it has filled in the gap of meaning, left vacant by the death of their spouse and/or the growing up of their children. Obviously this situation is unique to this particular group of people, who were the founders and the current leadership of this organization. It does illustrate however the crisis of meaning that accompanies a grief reaction and one way in which people can resolve that crisis. It also underscores Paul's advice of "work therapy" mentioned in the last chapter. These people are actively and emotionally involved in caring for other people. The strengthening and creation of new bonds of love is an excellent counter-balance to the severance of a bond of love. Active personal involvement in TLA provides an excellent blending of a sense of meaning and purpose and a loving involvement in other people's growth. In short, it's good

therapy. Any similar organization (like a church) that is both meaning-oriented and people-oriented could provide the same growth potential.

Leader (later): What role did your religion or faith play in your grief? Did it help resolve your grief or block it?

Joan: I have always considered my faith as very strong and precious, despite my current doubts. Mickey was a strong Christian--had been a Norbertine brother until ill health forced him out and he lived his faith. We saw our life as a part of God's plan, working primarily through him and secondarily through me. . . . He was in the hospital for eight months before he died, all of which time I was pregnant. I felt a lot of resentment early that he had to suffer so much, that I had to travel back and forth to the hospital, and that he wasn't taking care of me like he had during our first pregnancy. (later) I think the conflict between my faith and my emotions helped delay my grief reaction. I was so sure of Mickey's happiness and my "job well-done" that I couldn't feel sad. How could I be sad when God had taken Mickey to such a wonderful place as heaven . . . or so I thought.

Leader: How did that change?

Joan: Well, I guess it changed through our group and these people. They cried and got angry at God and everything, but still had faith. Finally, I began to see my anger and let me come out.

Leader: Are you still angry?

Joan: No, not much. I am mostly doubting God now. All of this stuff about virgin births, resurrections of dead bodies and the rest, I'm not so sure it makes any sense anymore. At this point I do feel that I am doing God's will in helping other widowed people and opening myself to all people. But the emotional closeness with God is not there. I feel as if I'm talking to a brick wall sometimes and am not really sure where I go from here. I suspect I am experiencing a religious crisis as my life is in transition, and that I will come out of it stronger yet.

Leader: I hope so.

Priscella: I was pretty religious before Henry's death too. I was in the CYA as a youth. Henry and I use to go to Mass every Sunday. Then when he died, I just turned off of church. I don't know where God is anymore. I cried and cried, asking him "Why" this happened, but no answer. Not a thing! Ever.

Leader: Is that where you are now?

Priscella: Yes, I listen to you all, your wonderful experiences, and I just don't know. I don't feel anything.

Leader: Give it time. You'll find it again in your own way.

Shirley: I felt abandoned by God too at my husband's death. There were many long nights when I felt really alone in more ways than one. Then I had that mystical experience that I told you about, when John appeared to me at the front door, just like he was walking in from work. It was a weird, weird experience,

but I immediately knew what it meant. It was John's way of telling me that he's o.k. He's still present with me, watching over me and the kids. From then on I knew God was on my side. I figured God allowed John to come back to do that, to show me he was o.k., so I figured God really does care.

Leader: Both God and John are present with you. Both of them love you.

Bob: You know, it's funny. Heaven use to be such a rational thing with me, before Marge's death. I mean I believed in heaven, but it was a point of intellectual discussion. Now I know heaven exists--I mean I don't even know it, I "live" it. I feel it in my guts! It's not a question of knowing anymore. It's automatic as being sure that I exist. Marge is there, at peace, finally after years of torment.

Leader: Did you ever have a mystical experience, like Shirley?

Bob: No, not as such, but I know what she means. They give you comfort and they're met to help you. I believe God does those kinds of things, sends "experiences," and answers prayers, and even speaks through people, in order to help you.

Nancy: For me that's the way I see God best now--in all of you. At times when we are really close, I feel God right here, along with each of our husbands and wives, just like we were all one big family, laughing and loving each other (others agree).

This excerpt illustrates the wide variety of ways that religion or meaning-system can influence how a person handles a personal tragedy. In Joan's case, intense religious devotion actually momentarily blocked her grief process. Priscella's previous religious activity did not contribute anything to the resolution of her grief either, although in her case all of the data is not in yet. Shirley, who came from a moderate religious background, has actually grown stronger religiously because of her loss and grief experience. In general the whole group agreed with Nancy that dogmatic religion is less a concern with them now, replaced by a more personal, experience-oriented religion. The key variable in determining whether religion is growth-producing or growth-blocking is probably still the quality of the religious content itself.

Leader: How has your concept of God changed over the years since the death of your spouse?

Joan: Having been raised in Catholic schools, I had a good idea of

the fear of God as well as the love of God. I now feel freer to interpret my actions in regard to His plan for my life, rather than use a check-list approach . . . this is good, this is bad.

Leader: You feel more grace . . . more acceptance from God.

Joan: Yes, that's it.

Priscella: I'm not sure I've ever known God. (pause)

Leader: Say more.

Priscella: I guess I've gone from a Santa Claus image of God to being an atheist. Before I always thought that God would give me anything I wanted, if I was just good. Well, I was good, real good and all I got was death.

Leader: You sound a bit angry.

Priscella: Now, I don't know. I'm not sure there's anybody out there at all.

Leader: The Santa Claus business died, but so far nothing has risen to take its place.

Priscella: No, nothing.

Nancy: I feel God's love strongly through other caring people. I consider all of the wonderful people who have been given to me, who God sent to me in my time of need. I feel like TLA was an answered prayer.

Leader: So God is more present now for you.

Nancy: And less up there beyond the clouds . . . but that too, I mean, that's where our husbands are, there with God. But God is also here among us.

Leader: Is that promise in the Bible, about all things working for good with those who love God, is that true from your experience?

All: Yes, maybe, no. (varied answers)

Leader: One at a time, please.

Shirley: When I look back over my life and the life of this organization, I am amazed by what has been accomplished. I believe this all has been according to God's plan, that He is behind all of this. All of this came out of tragedy. All of this would not have happened without tragedy. Sounds crazy ugh?

Ann: I would have been a helpless dependent creature all of my life, if Mickey stayed alive. It was almost as if God planned all of this, like it was the only way He was going to get me to grow up.

Leader: Then, did God cause death.

Shirley: No, I don't think so. There were times when I thought so, but now in retrospect I don't think so. It just happened . . . that's it. That's all there was to it. Then God came along and turned it into something good.

Leader: Then God is less powerful than you once supposed, that is, He does not control every little event in life.

All: (confusion, mixed answers)

Shirley: I suppose if that is true, that God is less powerful, He is more loving then. Instead of being distant, God is now closer than He ever was before in my life. God and I have had a thing together over the last few years, walking and talking

together early in the morning. In spite of how low I was, I always thought God would get me through this, one way or another.

Leader: That's quite a statement of faith. (others agree)

Priscella: I couldn't ever say that, but I really admire your guts.

Nancy: Yes, Shirley, I have admired your faith too. You've been the one person who has hung in there with the God stuff, even when the rest of us were shooting you down. It really means something to you.

Leader: And to all of you in your own ways.

This excerpt also illustrates the wide variety of understandings of God and the variety of ways that one's view of God can influence the handling of a tragedy. Shirley's spiritual growth process shows a definite trend away from the view of "God as Caesar" to "God as Fellow-Sufferer."²⁷ It is a transition that not everyone makes. Many, like Priscella, cannot get beyond being angry at the Caesar God for causing (or allowing) the death of their loved one. They cannot "see" God in and among the comforting love and concern of other human beings. As noted earlier, there is some evidence that Paul's spiritual journey reflects this same transition from the Ruling/Judging God to the Suffering/Comforting God. From the experience of this author, it seems like most people who do remain religious after a severe loss, do significantly alter their understanding of God. This spiritual growth process is usually in the direction of a more compassionate, comforting, and suffering servant model of God, in short, "God in Christ."

G. FACILITATIVE FACTORS

It is now appropriate to focus specifically on the four

²⁷A distinction borrowed from Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Macmillan, 1929), pp. 519ff.

facilitative factors--rituals, community, meaning-system, and faith--and raise the question of their role in facilitating spiritual growth. When a severe loss experience occurs, do these factors assist the participants to grow spiritually? In particular what is the interrelationship between these four factors, spiritual growth and the resolution of the grief process? These issues will be discussed from the viewpoint of Pauline theology.

Rituals

As noted in the last chapter, the only direct reference to ritual in Pauline writings is in 1 Cor 15:29-30. If the Corinthian context of this passage is one of loss and grief as speculated by this author, then the Baptism of the Dead ritual could be understood as a grief ritual, encouraged in part to help the participants facilitate their grief. Paul does not reject the use of ritual. In fact in this case, he uses its very existence to support his argument for the resurrection of the dead.

As also noted in the last chapter, there existed in the first century A.D. a rich and complex tradition of lamentation rituals and customs. Since Paul does not mention these rituals directly, it could be assumed from silence that he did not openly dispute their value. If he had one would have expected more mention of the disagreement in Paul's letters. No doubt Paul wished to respect the rituals and customs of local people as long as they were not openly contrary to Christian teaching. Further, he probably used such rituals as an opportunity for instruction, along the lines of the 1 Thess 4:13-18 passage. In

this sense then rituals could be used to facilitate spiritual growth. However, Paul probably did not support rituals for the reason of encouraging the free expression of grief emotions. On the contrary, from his treatment of the "tongues" controversy in 1 Cor 14, it might be supposed that he would apply the same principle ("all things done decently and in order") to any ritualistic observation that had a tendency to get emotionally carried away.

Paul's attitude toward rituals is one of polite tolerance, and partial support, especially if they could incorporate Christian instruction.

Community

From Paul's point of view, does a network of community help a person grow spiritually when a loss had occurred. No doubt Paul would answer "yes," but he would specify that the "network of community" should rightly be the church of Jesus Christ. He would also declare that the church's role in promoting and maintaining the sanctification of its members is operative in times of loss or not. There is no salvation (justification of sanctification) apart from the church.

Paul's understanding of the nature of the church is best expressed in 1 Cor 12 where he employs the image of the church as the body of Christ to help resolve the Corinthian controversy over "spiritual gifts." In chapter 12 Paul makes three indicative statements about the nature of the church based on this metaphor of the body.²⁸

²⁸The following analysis of 1 Cor is attributed to Dr. Hans Dieter Betz of School of Theology at Claremont.

Set off as they are from the preceding section by conjunctions (καί, γάρ, οὖν, δέ), these statements form the guiding principles of Paul's understanding of the nature of the church. These statements are: 1) the church like a body does not consist of one member, but of many (v. 14); 2) God has placed each member in the church, as He wills (v. 18); 3) although many, all members are a part of one body, the church (v.20).

The implications of these statements are clear. Because of this nature of the church, all Christians are interdependent just like each part of a body is interdependent for its existence on all other parts. Christians cannot exist (almost literally) apart from the Church, just like a hand or an eye cannot "live" apart from the body. Secondly, the diversity of the church, like the diversity of the body, is an essential part of its strength and very existence. God has arranged and ordered it this way. Rather than belittling and disrespecting the "differences," the church is to honor all members equally. In fact Paul would go one step further and suggest that the church is to even give greater honor to its "weaker" members (weaker in the eyes of the world). Thirdly, because all members of the church are one in the church, it is inevitable that when "one suffers, all suffer, and when one is honored, all rejoice" (1 Cor 12:26). All members of the church share in each other's burdens and joys by the very nature of the church.

Given this understanding of the nature of the church, how does being a member of the church promote and maintain spiritual growth? For Paul the very interdependence of the church members gives a partial answer. People join the church with the expressed "confession" of wanting to become "like Christ." This goal is the common goal of the

entire church, but the very interdependence of Christians conditions the achievement of that goal. Expanding upon verse 26, Paul might very well have said, "if one grows spiritually, all grow." There is a natural tendency for Christians to encourage, promote and "pull" on another along the road of spiritual growth. Similarly, because Christians are so interdependent, "one bad apple" can block the growth and salvation for all. Paul might also very well have said, "If one backslides, all backslide." This is why Paul advises such a harsh treatment of the "immoral" Corinthian Christian in 1 Cor 5. For Paul all Christians are interdependent and interrelated with all other Christians. This means that the continuing spiritual growth of each Christian is in part due to and dependent upon the continuing spiritual growth of other Christians. In short, for better or worse Christians are in the spiritual growth enterprise together.

What Paul argues for in general, is even more true in times of crisis, affliction, and loss. Here the church's interdependence becomes a crucial factor in enabling individuals to cope with and even grow in times of loss. In such times, it is important that Christians "actualize" their interdependence with deeds and gestures of love and compassion. Again for Paul, Christ set the example of sacrificial love in His death on the cross. This is the model and example of love that should permeate the entire "body" of the church. The indicative must now become an imperative. Paul advises his fellow Christians to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2) and "to weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15) and so on. Paul takes joy in hearing of and directly experiencing the love that Christians have for one another (see 2 Cor

1:3ff; 8:1ff). For Paul love is the καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδός ("more excellent way"). It is the binding glue of the body and the catalyst for spiritual growth.

There is still another very important part of Paul's understanding of the church that must be included here. For Paul the church is more than just a fellowship or an association of people, even more than a fellowship with a common purpose however noble. The church is a community created and sustained by God. The church has a "vertical" as well as a "horizontal" dimension. It is a community that is transcended by the ultimate and is therefore a community that transcends all other human communities. In terms of Paul's imagery of the body, the church has a head which is Christ (whose head is God). Like the head of the body, Christ guides, directs and rules over the church. The head gives the body its common purpose or mission. The head harmonizes all of the diverse members of the body. The church thus depends for its very existence on God and in particular on God's gracious act in Jesus Christ. Without this ultimate dimension, there would be no church.

For Paul the church's ultimate dimension is a crucial element in the church's ability to promote and maintain its members' sanctification process. There are more than just human efforts at work in the church. God in the form of the Holy Spirit is at work in and among the church to facilitate salvation (Phil 2:13). The spiritual growth process is ultimately sustained, authored and completed by God. Ultimately then, Christians are not the authors of their own growth, only the receivers of it. This is especially true in times of loss, crisis, and affliction, where all human resources and efforts are spent and yet God

transforms these events into moments of spiritual growth. God is the creative element in all growth. Thus spiritual growth ceases to be an automatic, predictable unfolding, but a totally new, dynamic and creative process, a process in which people can be periodically "surprised" by grace. Yet the spiritual growth process also remains a process that fulfills the deepest potential of humankind. For Paul then to be "in Christ" (and in His Church) is to be "related" to God and thus open to this additional growth-producing factor.

Meaning System and Faith

This dissertation has previously distinguished between "meaning-system" which is a set of cognitive beliefs or doctrines, and "faith" which is a pre-cognitive sense of trust. The New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann makes a similar analysis of Paul's understanding of faith.²⁹ He argues that Paul has "two concepts of faith-belief that must be distinguished."

The first is belief: willingness to consider true the facts reported of the pre-existent Son of God--incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection from the dead--and to see in them a demonstration of the grace of God. The second is a faith which is self-surrender to the grace of God and which signifies the utter reversal of a man's previous understanding of himself--specifically, the radical surrender of his human 'boasting.'³⁰

Bultmann goes on to argue that for Paul these two concepts of "faith-belief" come together in the same "salvation occurrence." It is not possible for Paul to believe (as true) the facts of the Christ-event without a personal act of self-surrender. Similarly, it is not

²⁹See Bultmann, I, 300.

³⁰Ibid.

possible for Paul to adopt a vague generalized faith without an expressed content. This author agrees with this analysis and therefore had placed "meaning-system" and "faith" under the same topic heading. For purposes of discussion and analysis however the distinction between these two terms will be maintained, even though it will be continually pointed out that meaning-system and faith exist side by side in Pauline thought.

Faith as trust is an attitude or basic life-orientation in which a person surrenders all efforts to maintain his/her self-sufficiency and "trusts" in God's gracious gift of salvation. The opposite of faith as self-surrender is the attitude or life-orientation of "boasting." In an attitude of boasting a person relies on his/her own efforts to achieve salvation, and appropriately takes credit for such achievements. This results in works righteousness. Faith as a trustful self-surrender is a giving up of boasting and a total reliance on the grace of God. Salvation then becomes experienced as an unmerited gift rather than as an accomplishment. Faith as a trustful self-surrender is more than an attitude. It is a basic life-orientation. The initial "act of faith" is the decision to re-orient radically one's life away from boasting and towards a trustful reliance on God's grace.

Bultmann has argued that "Paul understands faith primarily as obedience" and "the act of faith as an act of obedience."³¹ Bultmann rejects the idea of "faith as trust, founded on repentance."³² For evidence, he notes the rarity of the terms "forgiveness of sins" and

³¹Ibid., I, 314.

³²Ibid., I, 317.

"repentance" in Paul. At first it appears that Bultmann rejects the understanding of faith as trust as presented above. However, this author's analysis of faith as trust is not primarily based upon the concept of the forgiveness of sins nor repentance. Rather faith as trust is closely tied to obedience and self-surrender as described by Bultmann himself. It seems clear to this author that obedience presupposes trust. For Paul, Abraham is the founder and prototype of faith (Rom 4, Gal 3). God justified Abraham on the basis of his faith. That "faith" was expressed in obedience but in obeying, Abraham was trusting in God and in God's promise. One cannot give up or surrender oneself (or any aspect thereof) without trust. Self-surrender (or any kind of obedience) is by its very nature a risky, trusting act. On second thought then, Bultmann's analysis of faith as obedience and this author's suggestion of faith as trust are not as far removed as first supposed. Obedience presupposes trust and thus the two are closely interdependent.

The question now arises whether faith as trust facilitates spiritual growth, particularly in times of loss, crisis, and affliction. Undoubtedly, Paul would have answered "yes" to this question.³³ A basic life-orientation of trust, especially trust in God is the precondition for all spiritual growth. Without trust, there is no obedience; and without obedience there is no risking; and without risking, there is no growth. Every advance in spiritual growth involves a giving up of something old (existentially, something of the "old eon")--

³³What follows here is an elaboration of Pauline concepts in areas where he did not speak directly in his letters. This author believes that it is still within the bounds and spirit of Pauline thought.

an old habit, an old self-understanding, or an old destructive value. Every advance in spiritual growth also involves an embracing of something new (of the "new eon")--a new habit, a new self-understanding, or a new life-affirming value. Between the giving up of the old and the embracing of the new, there is a risky insecure gulf. Every advance in spiritual growth requires enough trust and obedience to bridge this gulf between the old and the new.

The crucial importance of faith as trust is especially critical in times of crisis, loss and affliction. Times of loss and affliction are times in which all human efforts fail, when it is painfully evident that one cannot save him/herself. In such times, one is more keenly aware of his/her total reliance on God. Thus, trust becomes all the more essential during these periods. A continued attitude of boasting in such times can only lead to self-destruction. An attitude of faith as trust leaves a person open to the redemptive activity of God that even in the severest loss is "working for good."

As previously noted, meaning-system or belief-system is an integral part of the faith-belief event. For Paul faith is never a generalized trust, but "faith in . . ." (Gal 2:16; Rom 10:14; Phil 1:29) or "faith that . . ." (1 Thess 4:14; Rom 6:8).³⁴ Bultmann argues that faith is simultaneously "confession," that is, faith "always has reference to its object--God's saving deed in Christ."³⁵ Faith

³⁴In addition to the ὅτι ("that") clause and the εἰς ("in," "into") usage, there is the use of πρὸς ("toward") in Philm 5; ἐν ("in") in Gal 3:26 and ἐπὶ ("on") in Rom 9:33 and 10:11.

³⁵Bultmann, I, 317.

includes an element of knowing. For Paul there is no faith without proclamation, without doctrine and dogma, and without knowledge of God's saving deeds. The content of that knowledge is all important. It is the story of God's redemptive love in Jesus Christ, and the promise of the fulfillment of that salvation in the age to come. The content of this meaning-system is that God is faithful, and therefore trustable. Thus, trust is reassured and strengthened by the content of faith. Faith as trust and meaning-system are interdependent.

The question arises then, does a meaning-system facilitate spiritual growth, particularly in times of crisis, loss and affliction? Paul would probably answer "yes" but specify that the meaning-system should rightly be the Christian belief-system. To Paul's way of thinking, only the Christian belief-system offers the most credible and helpful beliefs that in turn can fully facilitate spiritual growth. The issue then becomes one of the content of this meaning-system.

Paul would have probably described the content of the Christian belief-system (that is so helpful in terms of spiritual growth in times of loss) this way: God is a loving and gracious spirit that shares in our sufferings, like He shared in Christ's sufferings. Further, God can transform the darkest moment of despair and loss into new life. God did this in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and repeatedly in moments of loss, crisis and affliction for Paul. Again, the Christian belief-system promises hope, hope that as God fulfilled His promises in Christ, God will fulfill His promises of complete salvation in the age to come. The loss, despair and pain of the present age are momentary, and Christians will soon pass into a new age wherein there

will be no sorrow, no loss and no suffering. The power of sin and death will ultimately be defeated as they were initially in Christ's death and resurrection. This is God's promise. For Paul this kind of content gives to people amid loss a sense of hope, comfort and promise, which in turn facilitates spiritual growth.

The concept of hope plays a very important role in Paul's thinking. Hope is closely related to both faith as trust and to meaning-system. It functions as a bridge concept between the two. It carries elements of both trust and content. Hans Conzelmann argues that "hope . . . is simply the exposition of faith."³⁶ In return, faith also prevents hope from being a subjective-psychological or (an) objective-apocalyptic fantasy.³⁷ Paul does not argue for hope through pictures of what is hoped for. The apocalyptic imagery is there, but Paul is not an apocalypticist. There is no full scale picture of the age to come. Conzelmann comments:

No picture of the future is painted, in order to stimulate faith. Quite the reverse is true: hope is known only through the faith which accepts the promise where it perceives no worldly prospect of its being realized.³⁸

It is the nature of hope that it is based not on knowable facts, but on what is unseen (Rom 8:24f). In fact, Paul suggests that hope is strengthened by the lack of evidence. At this point, hope comes close to faith as trust. In return however, hope is based on factual content--not the content of the future, but of the past. Hope for the future is based on God's actions in the past, specifically on His

³⁶Conzelmann, p. 185.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., p. 191.

saving deeds in Jesus Christ. As God fulfilled His promises in Christ Jesus, so God can be counted on to fulfill His promises made in Jesus Christ regarding the future salvation to come. Hope then carries elements of both trust and content.

For Paul hope is a key concept in the facilitation of spiritual growth in times of loss, crisis and affliction. The Christian who has hope is open to the future and understands that the future is open. In times of severe affliction and loss, the hopeful person knows that God can redeem even the darkest hour. Therein lies hope. New growth possibilities are possible in the severest of loss experiences. This hope need not be based on "the facts." On the contrary, hope is based on what is unseen. Salvation is not present "although things are despairing, but precisely because there is no evidence of salvation."³⁹ Neither is hope an avoidance or an ignoring of the evil and pain. Hope is hoping in the face of the powers of sin and death. In fact, for Paul hope is even boasting in the presence of suffering, loss and hardship, trusting that God "is working for good."

For Paul faith and meaning-system are both facilitative factors of spiritual growth, and this is especially true in times of loss when all human efforts have failed. For Paul however faith and meaning-system are a part of the same dynamic. It is not possible to have a generalized trust in life; nor a system of beliefs without faith. The key facilitative factor for Paul is hope. Hope, which includes elements of both faith as trust and the content of a Christian belief-system,

³⁹Ibid.

sustains people amid crises and enables them to have faith (both trust and belief) that God is at work, transforming loss into spiritual growth.

H. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter focused on Paul's understanding of the interrelationship between sanctification and experiences of loss, affliction or hardship. Sanctification or spiritual growth was defined as the process of growing into the "likeness of Christ." It is by definition a multi-dimensional growth process. It includes becoming like Christ in one's beliefs, in one's attitudes, in one's values and priorities, and in one's character (trust, patience, humility). The fulfillment of this spiritual growth process is the actualization of humanity's God-given potential, expressed in the concept of the "image of God and made visible in the life and personhood of Jesus Christ. Thus, the sanctifying process represents God's intention for humanity. God authors it, sustains it, and lures it toward completion.

Like most of his contemporaries, Paul's thinking was solidly eschatological. The essence of eschatology is an awareness of the shortness of time and how that awareness transforms "ordinary life." In this sense all loss experiences, like all experiences that brush death, are "eschatological occurrences." They remind their participants of the shortness of time and initiate periods of self-evaluation which may in turn lead to significant life changes. Judgment and in particular self-judgment, becomes an important tool for spiritual growth. To the extent that loss experiences initiate self-judgment, they also can

serve as catalysts for spiritual growth.

Paul also understands that loss and suffering are at times necessary prerequisites for spiritual growth. Experiences of loss and suffering help Paul to stay "weak" and keep his "boasting" in check. Only in a state of weakness can God's resurrection power work to transform weakness into strength, losses into gains, and death into new life. If this way Paul can actually rejoice in experiences of loss and suffering, trusting that God's power is already at work, transforming these experiences into spiritual growth gains.

Finally, a specific focus on the four facilitative factors revealed that Paul had very little to say directly about rituals which could be interpreted as polite tolerance. Paul did have a lot to say, however, about the church as the body of Christ and how this kind of community, supported by bonds of love and rooted in the ultimate, can facilitate spiritual growth in times of loss. Paul also believed that faith as trust and as a belief-system were two other important factors. Faith as trust was a necessary prerequisite to every advance in spiritual growth, because every advance involved a risking act of obedience in which the person left behind the old and embraced the new. A Christian belief-system based on God's deeds and promises in Jesus Christ, creates hope which for Paul is another key facilitative factor for spiritual growth, especially in times of loss, affliction and crisis. Hope enables people to endure loss and open themselves to the possibility of God's creating, transforming power which is working to turn loss into gain. With certain qualifications then, Paul is generally supportive of the importance of at least community, meaning-system and faith as factors that can facilitate spiritual growth in times of loss.

Chapter 6

GRIEF AND GROWTH: DIALOGUE AND CONCLUSIONS

In death and grief we do not need as much protection from painful experiences as we need the boldness to face them. We do not need as much tranquilization from pain as we need the strength to conquer it. If we choose to love, we must also have the courage to grieve.

--Roy Nichols¹

A. INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters have examined the interrelationship of grief and growth from the perspectives of life-span psychology and Pauline theology. Each examination has yielded some unique and fascinating insights. Now, in accordance with the perspectival method outlined in chapter one, this chapter will focus on allowing these two disciplines to engage in dialogue around the subject of grief and growth. The insights and conclusions of one discipline will be confirmed, enriched and critiqued from the vantage point of the other discipline and vice versa. It is assumed that a complete understanding of grief and growth can only be derived from this dialogical process.

The early sections of this chapter will focus on sharpening the points of continuity and discontinuity between life-span psychology and Pauline theology. The first section, "Points of Continuity," will focus on those areas where Pauline theology and modern psychology are in

¹Roy and Jane Nichols, "Funerals: A Time for Grief and Growth," in Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (ed) Death: the Final Stage of Growth (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. 96.

agreement regarding the interrelationship of grief and growth. The second section, "Points of Discontinuity," will focus on areas where Pauline theology and modern psychology are in disagreement. These areas of disagreement have been presented in the form of questions. A third section will then focus on the unique contributions of both perspectives to a comprehensive understanding of grief and growth. It is hoped that this format will sharpen the areas of agreement and conflict between these two perspectives, as well as highlight the unique contributions of both.

The concluding sections of this chapter will focus on the four variables--community, rituals, meaning-system and faith--which have been the foci of this dissertation from the start. Drawing upon the evidence and dialogue of previous sections, this author will attempt to answer the question whether these factors are indeed significant variables toward the facilitation of a person's grief process. Of special interest will be the question whether these variables are independent or dependent variables in relationship to the overarching variable concerning the full and free expression of grief emotions.

Before proceeding to the task of dialogue and discussion between Pauline theology and life-span psychology, several words of caution and qualification need to be stated regarding the nature of the entities that are being compared. To an extent comparing Pauline theology and life-span psychology is like comparing "apples and oranges." As noted earlier, Paul was not a systematic theologian. His theology grew out of his life, his mission and the practical and specific problems of his churches. There are many subjects, both ancient and modern, that are

not directly addressed by Paul, and can only be inferred from implications and assumptions. Further, the only "evidence" there is of his theology is a small canon of seven letters, and a cluster of secondary sources.

In contrast life-span psychology does not represent the thought of a single individual, but of many people. It is best described as a "school of thought." Further, life-span psychology while being a highly specialized discipline, is like all psychology a very systematic inquiry. It uses the critical tools of the scientific method, of comparison studies, of empirical research and of planned experimentation. Paul did not have the luxury of such time, money or methods.

To an extent the comparison of Pauline theology and life-span psychology is also a comparison of ancient and modern psychologies. It must be remembered that the ancient world was a very different place and culture than modern western civilization. There were different world-views, assumptions about the nature of reality and of people, different cultures and certainly different physical environments.² Thus ancient psychology is very different from modern psychology. For example, modern western civilization is radically more individualistic than that of the ancient world. For the ancient person there was no life apart from his/her community. Thus, death and grief were primarily social events. In fact in the ancient world all significant emotional or life-cycle crises were resolved collectively through the religious

²For example, death was more common. In the ancient world it was not uncommon for parents to bury half of all of their children before they ever reached adulthood.

and social rituals of the community. This ancient psychology stands in sharp contrast to the highly individualistic methodologies, goals and contexts of modern psychology.

As this chapter proceeds to dialogue and compare Pauline theology and life-span psychology on the subject of grief and growth, it is extremely important that the clear differences between these two entities be kept in mind. By keeping these differences in mind, the reader will find the points of continuity all that much more striking and the points of discontinuity all that much more understandable.

B. POINTS OF CONTINUITY

To Be Human Is to Care

Modern psychology and Pauline theology agree on an understanding of human nature that includes an innate need or instinct to invest oneself emotionally in people, places and things. The drive to invest oneself emotionally in other "objects" is innate in human nature. In this sense it is universal and inevitable. Human beings cannot live without investing themselves emotionally. This concept of emotional attachment or investment can be translated into everyday language as "to care." It must be remembered that "to care" or to be emotionally attached, can include both positive feelings (love, joy) and negative feelings (anger, guilt, fear). Anger is not antithetical to love. In fact, to be angry is often a sign of caring, if not love. It must also be remembered that to attach oneself emotionally to another "object" is another way of describing the process of valuing or giving meaning.

Humans value what they care about; what they are emotionally attached to. This attaching, caring, valuing process is an innate drive in the human species.

In a sense then it can be suggested that human beings need to invest themselves emotionally. Certainly in earlier eons of human development, as Bowlby has suggested³ survival depended on how successfully an individual attached him/herself emotionally to other humans. In modern times the mental and emotional health of humans is still in large measure dependent upon the emotional bonds between people. It is, of course, seen dramatically in the case of the newborn human infant who must bond with his/her mother within the first few days of life or die. In a broader sense, but just as crucially, adult humans need to be related to other humans. A trusted, caring community of friends, family and colleagues is essential for the maintenance of a person's mental and emotional health. Human affection, affirmation and contact is just as valid a human need as is water, air, and food.⁴ Besides the attachment to other humans, it can also be argued, that attachments to non-human objects, like a home, a role, certain things, and even ideas, are also essential to human health. These attachments help sustain a person's identity and sense of rootedness.⁵ They provide a security

³See John Bowlby, Attachment and Loss (New York: Basic, 1973)

⁴Maslow has argued a similar point of view. See Abraham H. Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

⁵On importance of cultural and societal factors toward influencing identity formation, see Erik Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis (New York: Norton, 1964), pp. 179ff.

and inner stability that is essential to good emotional health.

At this point modern psychology is going one step beyond Paul's understanding of human nature by clarifying that emotional investment in non-human objects is just as essential to health as human attachments. Paul would probably be suspicious of this point. He would be keenly aware of the many varied forms of idolatry and other distorted emotional attachments. Paul would want to remind modern psychology that the innate drive to invest oneself emotionally can be easily distorted by the power of Sin, resulting in "attachments" that are not healthy. Modern psychology needs to clarify the distinction between attachments that are healthy and attachments that are not healthy.

Life-span psychology also indirectly supports this viewpoint. From the perspective of life-span psychology, it was suggested that the human life-cycle could be viewed as an alternating process of attachment and loss. At each stage in one's life, a person attaches him/herself emotionally to a wide variety of "objects" associated with that developmental phase. Then as that person passes into a new developmental phase, he/she voluntarily or involuntarily loses the attachments of the former phase. If that loss is unwelcomed, the grief process is painful and agonizing, but if that loss is welcomed, the grief process probably occurred gradually and prior to the actual loss. In either case, the attachments of the former phase are gradually displaced by the emerging attachments associated with the new developmental phase. A person is never entirely without attachments and to the extent that he/she is attached, then he/she is in pain, limbo and disorientation. Attachments, whatever the kind or shape, form the thread

of continuity and stability in an individual's ever-changing life cycle.

At this point Paul would add the same qualification that he did earlier. Not all attachments are equally good, regardless of how much continuity and stability they provide. Emotional attachments can be distorted (in either intensity or in object) and the resulting idolatry is not a part of emotional or spiritual health.

This view of human nature as including an innate drive to invest oneself emotionally can be supported by Pauling theology, although this was not the primary subject of earlier chapters. On the basis of God's redemptive love in Jesus Christ, Paul could argue that humans are made to love. Christ's life, death and resurrection was the ultimate example of God's love. It revealed the true nature of God as gracious love. Christ was also the New Adam and revealed in His being and action the essential or true nature of humanity. For Paul, Christ's example illustrates what it truly means to be human. To be human, as humanity was essentially created to be, is to be "like Christ." The predominant characteristic element in being "like Christ" is being a person who loves God and other people. This is the whole fulfillment of the Law. Conversely, to be indifferent or careless is to be antithetical to God in Christ and to humanity's own true nature.

Paul can also argue that humans, in particular, Christians, are essentially people best understood in the context of community. Normative human life is life in community. Humans are made for community. Specifically, the community of faith or the church plays a crucial role in the maintenance and facilitation of a person's spiritual health. For Paul it is not possible to be a Christian (at least, not for very

long) apart from the church. Humans are made to be emotionally involved with one another. In fact, Paul might have said, "Christians need each other."

While Paul's use of the word "love" is narrower than the broader concept of attachment as understood by modern psychology, he nevertheless supports the general proposition that human beings, according to their true nature, are made to and in fact need to care or to invest themselves emotionally. Paul recognizes that humanity's actual or sinful nature often distorts this drive into various forms of idolatry, but, for Paul, the human drive to care is an essential part of its true nature. Humans were created by God to care. Now this understanding of human nature as including a drive to invest emotionally, ceases to be merely descriptive and starts to be normative. At this point Paul goes one step beyond modern secular psychology. "To be human is to care" is not only what humans are but also what they ought to be. This suggests that to the extent that humans cease to care, cease to invest themselves emotionally, to that extent and at that point they cease to be human. It also suggests that God's goal or intention for humanity is that they do care, and that they do invest themselves emotionally. God desires this for His own pleasure and for humanity's fulfillment of its own essential nature.

There are differences of emphasis and certain qualifications between modern psychology and Pauline theology, but they are generally in agreement on an understanding of human nature that includes an innate drive to care or to invest oneself emotionally.

Loss Is Inevitable, Even Necessary

Human beings inevitably and universally form emotional attachments in varying degrees to other people, places and things. It is human nature to do so. Both Paul and modern psychology are in agreement at this point. They are also in agreement that these attachments are inevitably ruptured by gradual or sometimes sudden change. Loss is an inevitable and universal part of human existence. Therefore grief is also unavoidable.

Modern psychology has documented the wide variety and universality of loss experiences. Loss experiences are more common and universal than just the dramatic loss of loved ones through death and divorce. There are hundreds of other varied kinds of losses, some of which can be equally painful. Each one of these losses, depending on the degree of attachment, involves a grief reaction. That grief reaction takes on many varied forms and expressions, in part depending on the type of loss which was incurred. At times loss experiences are so common and continuous that individuals hardly realize that they are grieving.

From the vantage point of the human life cycle, loss is also inevitable. Human beings are constantly changing with each year of their passing life. For the most part these developmental changes are gradual and continuous, but nevertheless inevitable. Every one of these countless changes involves a loss as well as a gain. Thus, human beings are continuously experiencing loss in one degree or another. Even in life-cycle events that seem happy, there is often a hidden loss. From

the vantage point of life-span psychology, it can also be argued that loss is not only inevitable, but at times even necessary. Certain developmental losses must occur if a person is to grow successfully from one life-stage to another. The key variable is timing. Losses that come when a person is developmentally "ready," comes easily, gradually, and may not even be experienced as loss. In part this is true because when a person is developmentally ready, he/she is being "pulled" into the next life stage by the desire to grow, as much as he/she is being "pushed" by grief out of the old life-stage. Conversely, losses that come when a person is not developmentally "ready," are experienced as painful, traumatic, in part because there is no growth or the growth is being resisted. In either case efforts to resist developmental loss and cling to past attachments will only block developmental growth and endanger that person's emotional health. Thus, from the vantage point of the life-cycle, loss is not only inevitable but at times even necessary.

From the perspective of Pauline theology, loss is also understood as an inevitable part of life. For Paul, loss is a characteristic feature of this eschatological age, ruled as it still is by the power of Sin and Death. Loss, whether caused by death itself or other afflictions, is inevitable in human existence. Only in the Messianic age to come will all loss and sorrow be vanquished. Ultimately then, loss is only temporary, but as far as "this life" is concerned, loss is an inevitable part of human existence.

For Paul loss and sorrow are also inevitable in the sense that Christians and anyone else who attempts to lead a righteous life in this evil age will inevitably suffer. Christians and especially apostles

will experience more than their fair share of loss and sorrow. Some of these losses will be inflicted upon Christians; others will be voluntarily accepted "on behalf" of the gospel. In either case this increased suffering is in itself a sign that the Messianic age is approaching. So, whether it be of "natural losses" or of losses due to being a Christian, in either case, loss is an inevitable part of human existence.

Paul primarily understands loss as a negative experience, a part of the afflictions and sufferings that he hopes will be vanquished in the age to come. However, Paul also acknowledges that spiritual growth can occur as a result of painful loss and suffering experiences. One can grow in patience and faith, in developing closer bonds of love and sympathy with others, in gaining new theological insights into God, in revising old values, and in general becoming like Christ in His sufferings. So in an indirect way, Paul acknowledges, like the life-cycle theorists, that loss is not only inevitable, but at times even necessary for spiritual growth.

By "necessary" Paul does not mean to suggest that only the masochist can be a Christian. Rather he means that living a life of faith necessitates certain risks, sacrifices, and hardships that inevitably involve certain painful losses. These losses are often transformed by God into greater gains, so that later the losses seem secondary in comparison to the gain received. The key issue here seems to be free choice. If a Christian voluntarily accepts certain losses⁶ these

⁶Another word for this is sacrifice. A sacrifice is a loss voluntarily accepted.

losses are indeed often off-set by greater gains in spiritual growth. Conversely, if a Christian resists those losses, clinging to "old" attachments, he/she blocks his/her spiritual growth. For Paul there is a sense in which losses at times can be necessary for full spiritual growth.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that because loss is inevitable, pain and grief are inevitable. Both life-span psychology and Pauline theology acknowledge the simple and yet profound observation that loss is painful. Bonds of attachment are extensions of one's life and identity. The rupture of these bonds, especially when unwelcomed, inevitably involves pain and grief. Pain is an inevitable part of human existence. Indeed, grief is unavoidable. The issue now becomes how best to design humans to deal with pain and grief.

Growth Can Come From Loss

Modern psychology and Pauline theology are also in agreement concerning the conviction that growth can come from loss. Modern psychology has argued convincingly that grief is a process and as a process it has a directionality or telos. The grief process moves toward the goal of detaching a person emotionally from that which is lost. By so doing, the grief process gradually frees that person's emotional energy for new investments and attachments. The successful completion of the grief process is therefore "necessary" for the maintenance of a person's emotional health. Unless he/she completes this process, his/her emotional energy remains locked in the past and is unable to be appropriately and healthily reinvested into new relationships. To that

extent a person is endangering his/her emotional health. In this sense grief is necessary to the emotional health of the human species and may be even essential to its very survival.

The general psychological studies on grief have described the grief process as a restoring or a returning of the person to emotional health. This imagery does not successfully capture the growth nature of the grief process. Life-span psychology, however, has described the purpose of the grief process as developmental growth. Developmental growth is the passing of an individual from one life-stage to another. One half of that process involves the leaving of the old life-stage and its attachments. This is the grief process. The other half of the growth process involves the entering into a new life-stage and investing in new attachments. Developmental growth involves both a detaching from the old and a reinvesting into the new. In reality, the process of detaching and reinvesting go on simultaneously and may be considered the same process. Thus, the grief process is a part of the growth process and essential to it.

Thus, from the developmental perspective, the grief process is more than just a restoring or returning of a person's emotional health. The grief process is a growing process, an advancement into new territory. After a loss and the successful completion of his/her grief process, a person is a "new creation." He/she is different than he/she was prior to the loss. The person has grown! In time of loss, people can do more than just "recover." They can also grow! Life-cycle theorists have thus sharpened the "growth character" of the grief process.

Paul supports this same conviction. Paul's focus, however, is

primarily on spiritual growth or sanctification, which he defines broadly as a "becoming like Christ." This spiritual growth process is a multidimensional process, involving growth in knowledge, attitudes, values and behavior. Thus, for Paul there are several avenues of spiritual growth (which were described in the last chapter). Regardless of which type of spiritual growth, Paul convincingly argues that loss can be a catalyst for spiritual growth.

Paul explains this close connection between loss and spiritual growth several ways. First, for Paul spiritual growth happens because all loss events are an "eschatological occurrences" and carry an element of judgment. Judgment when translated into self-judgment can be a key motivation for growth. Secondly, for Paul spiritual growth can happen in times of loss and suffering, because God is at work bringing new life out of death. This is the resurrection power of God, evident supremely in the resurrection of Christ, but still present in every occasion of "dying." God is continuously at work bringing new life out of death. Like life-cycle theorists, Paul would understand this spiritual growth as genuine advancements, and not just a return to health or a healing in the narrow sense. After a loss, a person is genuinely a new creation spiritually, thanks to God. So Paul and modern psychology are in agreement on the general principle that growth can come from loss.

Suffering to Grow

Modern psychology and Pauline theology are also in agreement on the conviction that in order to grow in time of loss, one must face and even embrace the pain. This is not to say that one should actively

seek out pain. On the contrary that would only lead to masochism. However, once the pain of loss and death appear, one only grows by willfully embracing that pain. All attempts to drug, escape, delay or otherwise avoid pain are counterproductive to growth. The only way one grows is by fully experiencing and even embracing his/her pain. This simple and yet frightening insight has been generally supported by the data gathered from grief studies, from life-span psychology and from Pauline theology.

Modern research studies on grief and loss over the past thirty years has argued that the single most important factor toward facilitating an individual's recovery from a significant loss and his/her restoration of health is the free and full expression of his/her grief feelings. In order to fully and freely express one's grief feelings, one must face and even embrace the pain of his/her loss. That is not an easy task, because obviously pain hurts. Yet, this growth-facilitating principle is clear. In the face of loss and death, the way to grow is not to avoid pain, but actually to go deeper into one's pain. The more one can face, embrace and work through the pain, the more that his/her grief process will be resolved easily, quickly, and eventually with less pain. Conversely, the more one denies, avoids, delays or represses his/her pain, the more blocked, drawn-out and eventually painful the grief process will be.

The same principle regarding pain and growth applies to developmental losses as well as accidental losses. In fact, life-cycle theorists have generally supported the unavoidability and inevitability of developmental change and loss. Developmental losses are inevitable

and unavoidable. If a person avoids the developmental change that is obviously taking place, in part because of the pain associated with that change, he/she only delays and compounds his/her problems. Developmental changes do not "go away." A developmental crisis that is avoided now will only "rise up" later with greater severity and complications. The only effective solution is to deal with developmental changes directly in part by facing the pain that is associated with the loss dimension of any developmental change. The pain must be dealt with directly and openly if a person is to grow through the crisis into the next life-stage.

Furthermore, most life-cycle theorists agree that developmental loss and its pain does not "go away," once it is initially resolved in one life-stage.⁷ Each developmental crisis to some extent is a re-living and a previewing of all other developmental crises. Resolving the issues of one developmental crisis does not insulate one from the next crisis. The human life cycle is a long series of developmental changes, each one embodying a loss of greater or lesser significance. An individual must deal with each developmental crisis, at each life-stage, and each time must face and deal with the pain therein. If anything, developmental changes in the second half of life are even potentially more painful because they often involve greater losses. The only transferrable element from crisis to crisis is the "how to" of resolving a developmental crisis. One significant element in that "how to" is the principle outlined here that growth is maximized when pain

⁷For example, see Erikson, pp. 91ff.

is faced and embraced.

There is one important qualification to this general principle that only as one faces his/her pain does he/she grow. The human psyche cannot deal with pain constantly nor absolutely. Recent grief researchers⁸ are now⁹ suggesting that the most effective kind of grief process is that process which includes both periods of pain and periods of comfort, support and mitigation. Comfort makes possible the support that enables one to face the pain, which in turn leads to growth. Comfort and pain need to be in balance, as the growth formula would support (affirmation + confrontation = growth).¹⁰ All confrontation with no periods of comfort is just as growth-blocking as is all comfort with no confrontation with pain. This qualification does not invalidate the general principle that in order to grow in times of loss one must face and work through his/her pain.

Paul's way of dealing pastorally with loss and its pain reflects both of these elements just described: the embracing of pain and the mitigation of pain through comfort. His style reflects the

⁸Most notable, Colin Murray Parkes, Bereavement (New York: International Universities Press, 1972).

⁹There seems to be a brief history to this cycle. Modern psychology initially accused health-professionals of providing too much comfort with no confrontation with pain. Gradually professionals became persuaded that the most helpful thing to do for a grieving person was to confront him/her with his/her loss and pain. Recently, there have been some writers who have favored a balanced approach of confrontation and comfort.

¹⁰This concept is largely taken from Howard J. Clinebell, Jr. Growth Counseling for Marriage Enrichment (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 11. The theoretical foundations for this concept can be found in Maslow.

importance of both elements. There are large sections of Paul's writings that emphasize the encouraging comfort, hope and assurance in the midst of pain and suffering. Many will thus accuse Paul of escapism, avoidance and of advocating advice that is psychologically unhealthy. Yet, there is another section of material in Paul's writings that openly acknowledges the reality of pain and suffering. Paul is keenly aware of his own sufferings, those of his Christians and, of course, those of Christ. Suffering and hardship form a central and repeated theme in his writings. He encourages both the direct facing of suffering and the comforting assurances of sympathy, hope and faith.

Paul can encourage his readers to face openly and even embrace pain and suffering because of his conviction that spiritual growth can come from so doing. For example, suffering personally helped Paul resist his tendency to boast and take pride in his own efforts. Suffering also helped strengthen in Paul the virtues of humility and self-sacrifice. By so doing Paul felt himself to be growing into the "likeness of Christ." Chapter five also described several other ways that Paul understood people to grow spiritually in times of loss and death. They included: growth in theological knowledge, growth in love and compassion, growth in values, and growth in character.

If, as Paul suggests, people can grow from an encounter with suffering and pain, then it can be deduced that Paul would encourage the willful facing and even embracing of pain as one avenue toward spiritual growth. Certainly for Paul people can spiritually grow apart from suffering. Certainly too, Paul seeks to combine the direct embracement of one's pain with periods of comfort, sympathy and hope-

filled knowledge. Also, Paul would not want to openly advise his readers to actively seek out suffering for suffering's sake. Yet, when suffering and pain do come to Christians, as in the case of loss and death, Paul can encourage them to face willfully and to embrace their pain, knowing that out of the depths of pain God can and will bring spiritual growth. So convinced is Paul of this growth-facilitating approach to suffering and pain, that he actually "rejoices" in suffering knowing (to paraphrase Paul) that suffering produces spiritual growth.

Modern psychology and Pauline theology agree that in order to grow in times of loss and death, one must face and deal with his/her pain. They would also agree that one important qualification to this principle would be the regular and relatively equal presence of comfort and support as well. Given such support, one grows (spiritually or emotionally) in times of loss by openly facing one's pain.

The Growth-Facilitating Factors

This dissertation has focused on four variables: community, rituals, meaning-system and faith. This dissertation has sought to determine the relative influence of these variables upon the facilitation of a person's grief process in time of loss. The disciplines of lifespan psychology and Pauline theology served as the primary fields of study. Both perspectives revealed several significant points of agreement on the relative influence and importance of these variables. The points of disagreement regarding these four variables will be discussed in the next section.

Modern research studies on grief and loss have generally supported the positive role that a supportive community can play in aiding a bereaved person to resolve his/her grief process. The key variable is not the mere availability of a supportive community, but the willingness of people in that community to encourage and accept the griever's free expression of grief feelings and, in particular, of negative feelings. The more other people encourage and accept a bereaved person's grief feelings, the more that that person's grief process is facilitated.

The importance of a community's character was confirmed by a helpful distinction between empathy and sympathy.¹¹ The personal reactions of bereaved people and some research have confirmed the helpfulness of an empathetic attitude and responses. Empathy is defined as feeling with another person and thereby to some extent "reliving" one's own grief. The contrast, sympathy, which was generally found not to be helpful, was characterized by a condescending, formalized, and distancing attitude or responses. This helpful distinction accounts for the vast success of self-help grief groups and organizations, which base their approach on "a griever to griever" process. It seems clear that the crucial variable is not just the availability of a supportive community, but its character. A community characterized by an accepting "empathetic" attitude is growth facilitating, whereas a community characterized by a judgmental "sympathetic" attitude is growth-blocking.

¹¹See "Supportive Community" of Chapter two of this dissertation for the full references.

The examination of the community variable from the perspective of life-span psychology did confirm the general presence and importance of a supportive community in assisting a person to adjust emotionally to a developmental loss. Life-span psychology did also strongly suggest that people need supportive, growth facilitating communities, not just in times of developmental crises, but continuously throughout their life-cycle. This is especially true when it is remembered that developmental losses are not confined to periodical crises, but actually occur continuously and gradually throughout one's life cycle. By giving people a place where they can release their emotions on a continuous basis, community helps to maintain a person's emotional health and make the inevitable losses less severe.

Paul's theological understanding of community, as reflected primarily in his image of the church as the body of Christ (1 Cor 12), confirms these same insights. Paul confirms the general, but critical importance of the church in assisting people in times of hardship and loss. The church is the primary instrument of care and comfort, both one another's comfort and God's. That comfort is transmitted through letters, personal visitations, gift-giving, prayers, mutual sacrifices and a host of other caring acts. Without such a community, people would find it much more difficult, if not impossible, to bring new life out of loss experiences.

Along with life-span psychology, Paul also confirms that this community of the church is important not just in times of crisis and hardship, but as a continuous feature of a person's life. In a post-resurrection age, the church is the primary instrument for the

advancement of spiritual health. There is no being a Christian apart from the Church. Paul's image of the church as a body vividly highlights the interdependence, diversity and ultimate unity of the church as a community. Christians are bound one to another. In a sense there is no salvation or sanctification apart from the community.

Paul also affirms that the real variable is not the mere presence of community, but its character. Paul agrees that "love" must be carefully defined. Genuine love (or agape) is characterized by an empathetic attitude that respects and values the other. Agape is also characterized by self-sacrifice, ultimately illustrated in Christ's life and death. Christ's example of love included an empathetic identification and emptying of Himself with the human race. (Phil 2:1-11) A community characterized by such a love (agape) is growth-facilitating; a community characterized by a phony love (manipulative, condescending and legalistic) is growth-blocking. Such a love (agape) would easily accept and encourage a bereaved person's emotions, including the negative emotions.

The only other variable on which there were significant points of agreement between life-span psychology and Pauline theology was the faith variable. This area of agreement is primarily between two individuals: Erik Erikson and Paul. Erikson defined basic trust as a pre-cognitive sense of trust in life. He characterized it as a "self-surrender." This basic trust reached its climax developmentally in the first year of life. This initial conflict between basic trust and basic mistrust was resolved in a ratio of basic trust to basic mistrust that formed the cornerstone of all future developmental growth. Each

subsequential developmental crisis relived (to some extent) this initial conflict. If a person had a sufficient storehouse of basic trust built up, then he/she was able to trust in life enough to grow.

Paul would also agree that faith or trust is a key element in enabling people to grow spiritually in times of loss and death. He would not object to characterizing this faith as a "self-surrender." This would be particularly true in times of loss and death, wherein one's own resources are revealed to be limited and finite. Paul would probably not object either to Erikson's analysis of the formation of basic trust in the first year of life. Paul would hasten to add, however, that faith or trust cannot be limited to or reduced to a developmental stage in the first year of life. Faith can "develop" at any age, if a person correctly understands the ultimate object of all faith (i.e., God).

Paul would also agree that hope is intricately related to faith. However, Paul would again hasten to add that faith and hope must be faith in something or hope that something will prevail. For Paul a generalized faith "in life" is inadequate, as is hope in the abstract. There is no faith without God and no hope without Christ. Erikson would agree that meaning-system or religion is of value in regularly renewing and sustaining basic trust throughout the life-cycle. Erikson would of course resist maintaining the exclusive value of Christ or even God.

Thus, after generally agreeing that faith and meaning-system are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, Erikson and Paul part company over the ultimate value of the Christian meaning-system. Their

points of continuity now fade into dialogue and conflict.

C. POINTS OF DISCONTINUITY

Are Losses Ultimately Temporary or Permanent?

Both modern psychology and Paul agree that loss is an inevitable and essential feature of human existence. Paul, however, believed that human existence as he knew it was passing. He was living during the "in-between time." The Christ had already come and His resurrection was "the first fruit" of the new age. Yet the Messianic Age had not yet fully arrived. The powers of Sin and Death still ruled, even though they were defeated in Christ's resurrection. In the Messianic Age to come God would ultimately defeat these powers. All losses would be restored. There will be no more sorrow. Therefore for Paul all losses, however severe, are ultimately only temporary separations. In the Messianic Age all losses will be restored. Paul expected the arrival of that age soon.

Modern psychology, including life-span psychology, approaches the issue of loss and grief from a totally different cosmology. Modern psychology assumes a life-line view of history and the human life-cycle. Each moment in time is unique and irreplaceable. Therefore each loss is final (at least in human existence as it can be scientifically studied). Modern psychology is totally secular. There is no entity outside of time, some eternal being that ultimately "keeps" all that is lost in this life in some timeless state and restores it at some future time. As far as modern psychology is concerned, all losses are final.

These two radically different cosmologies dictate two different

approaches to loss and grief. Understanding that all losses are ultimately only temporary, Paul advises his readers "to endure" and "to be patient." He uses theological knowledge of the coming Messianic Age to deny the finality of the loss and of death itself. The ultimate victory over death belongs to God and that victory will be soon. Then God will restore all that is lost. Again and again in the face of pain and grief, Paul reminds his readers of this hopeful knowledge. Because of this eschatological knowledge, Christians need not grieve as the non-believers do who do not have this hope (see 1 Thess 4:13). The thrust of his approach is to temper grief with knowledge and hope, and strengthened with this knowledge one can "endure."¹²

Modern psychology would critique Paul's approach to loss and grief as escapist and growth-blocking.¹³ Paul would be accused of providing people with a way of escaping the reality of their loss. This eschatological knowledge is a form of denial, cloaked in theological language. Modern psychology would accuse Paul of fostering the repression of grief emotions, thereby ultimately blocking a person's growth and endangering his/her health. With Paul's approach, a bereaved person

¹²It should be pointed out that Paul's eschatological approach to loss and grief is not confined to the first century Christians. Many modern Christians with the same or slightly adapted views, understand all loss as ultimately temporary.

¹³Paul's approach does not reflect the thought of all the ancient world. The lamenting traditions favored a more free, open and volatile expression of grief emotions. Modern psychology would tend to side with this tradition against Paul. In a sense, then, this conflict is not just between modern psychology and Paul, but in part between Paul and his own contemporaries as it is in part between modern psychology and some of our contemporaries.

would be encouraged to cling to lost attachments. His/her emotional energy would never be freed ~~from~~ the past, through the grief process, to be reinvested in new relationships. Theoretically such a person would have less emotional energy available in the present for love, work and mission. Modern psychology would suggest that people became more healthy and loving by facing the finality of their loss and its pain and then working that grief process through to completion.

Understanding that all losses are final and permanent, modern psychology favors encouraging the bereaved to openly face the reality and finality of their loss. Therein lies great pain. The bereaved need to face that pain. They need to openly and freely express their grief feelings. Assuming the right conditions, the grief process will eventually complete itself and a person will invest him/herself into new relationships. The way to grow and to be healthy, for modern psychology, is for the bereaved person to freely and fully express his/her emotions. This approach assumes that all losses are final and the sooner a person realizes that fact the better.

Paul would critique the approach of modern psychology as cruel and sadistic. Why allow people to suffer needlessly and endure such anguish, when the truth is that they will see their loved ones again? Paul would have no objection to grief per se, but why torture oneself needlessly? Why grieve as if there is no hope, when in fact there is? Paul could accuse modern psychology of ultimately being spiritually growth-blocking. The attitude of modern psychology inhibits people from seeing the spiritual truth about the nature of the cosmos, that it is ultimately ruled by a loving and eternal God. Why have people go

through the anguish of their grief work, only to discover at some later date that all their losses were never really lost?

Thus modern psychology and Pauline theology have come head to head in a most pointed conflict. This conflict is actually a complex one, which this author admits to oversimplifying for the purpose of clarification. Actually, the conflict can best be described as two opposing "trends." Pauline theology de-emphasizes the finality and therefore the severity of loss, and to that extent it de-emphasizes the pain of grief and the necessity of grief work. Conversely, modern psychology emphasizes the finality and reality of loss and to that extent it emphasizes the pain of grief and the necessity of grief work. These two trends are thus in conflict.

Ultimately there is no solution to this conflict. If human existence is fading and the new Messianic Age is dawning, then Paul is right that all losses are temporary and it is best to temper grief with hope. Or even if the Messianic Age is not to come cosmically, but existentially at each person's death, then Paul is still partially right. All losses will be restored. If, on the other hand, Paul is wrong and all losses are final and permanent, then the best advice is that of modern psychology, which is to face the loss and do the grief work. The solution to this conflict is ultimately beyond (very beyond) the scope of this dissertation.¹⁴

¹⁴There could be circumstances under which Paul and modern psychology would agree. For example, there are certain losses that are by their nature temporary, like a regular separation due to business, military service or imprisonment. Another dramatic example would be the prisoner-of-war or concentration camp experiences of military

Is a Meaning-System Inhibiting to Growth or Essential to It?

This dissertation began with the question: "In times of loss and death, does a person's personal meaning-system facilitate his/her grief process and thereby his/her growth?" This question was examined from the perspective of modern psychology, including life-span psychology and Pauline theology. The evidence has been fascinating, confusing and contradictory. The conflict between modern psychology and Pauline theology is not sharply drawn because the evidence has been so inconclusive and confusing at points. Furthermore, how one understands the role of meaning-system is closely tied to the previous conflict over the nature of losses in time. Nevertheless, the conflict generally revolves around whether in times of loss, a person's meaning-system inhibits growth by inhibiting the grief process or whether a person's meaning-system is essential to growth.

It must be remembered that meaning-system has been defined in this dissertation as a cognitive set of beliefs or doctrines about the nature of reality, God, human nature and so on. Such a personal meaning-system need not be overtly religious, although organized religion has traditionally been the source of most people's meaning-systems. It might include any set of philosophical, religious or political beliefs that influence a person's life. Communism or Americanism

personnel. In such cases Paul's advice "to endure" would be appropriate and reality-oriented. Modern psychology would concur. In other cases where losses are understood by modern psychology to be final, such advice would be inappropriate and fantasy-oriented. This suggests that the most critical role that any helping professional can play for a bereaved person is helping him/her to accurately determine whether his/her loss is temporary or final.

can just as equally be a meaning-system as can the Christian religion.

The evidence from modern psychology strongly suggests that there is a meaning crisis or dimension associated with the grief process. In times of loss or death, there is a temporary "lapse of meaning" for the bereaved. This is particularly true in cases where the loss is severe. The symptoms of this meaning crisis are in part periods of purposelessness, existential anxiety, meaninglessness and hopelessness. This lapse of meaning also accounts for the high correlation between grief and suicide, the latter of which can be understood primarily as a disease rooted in hopelessness.

This conclusion has also been supported by the evidence from life-span psychology which understands meaning as a function of emotional attachment. Persons give meaning to those "objects" to which they are emotionally attached,¹⁵ but since a person's attachments change with every developmental change, his/her personal meaning-system inevitably changes. Erikson also suggested on the basis of his understanding of the life-cycle that the ego-integrity vs. despair crisis (which is essentially a crisis of meaning) is previewed in every other crisis. There is a "mini" crisis of meaning in all life cycle crises, in part because every loss foreshadows the ultimate loss of life itself. This would confirm the idea that there is a lapse of meaning associated with the grief process.

Pauline theology has also indirectly supported this conclusion.

¹⁵It can also be argued that people become emotionally attached to those "objects" with which they find meaning. It is a two-way street. Probably the "meaning process" and the "emotional attaching process" occur simultaneously. To this author's mind they are two ways of describing the same process.

An analysis of the background of Paul's letters suggests that a crisis of meaning initiated by the death of loved ones was often the context to which Paul was providing new theological knowledge. Paul himself has indirectly suggested that one avenue of spiritual growth in times of loss and death is through the process of re-evaluating one's values and theological understandings of God. Thus, these two perspectives are in general agreement on the presence of a meaning dimension or crisis in the grief process.

To the extent then that there is present in a grief reaction a "lapse of meaning" or a meaning crisis, a bereaved person's personal meaning-system could be an important independent variable. A person's meaning-system and its character could influence the severity of that person's lapse of meaning and the availability of that person's spiritual resources for resolving it. For example, a person with a well-thought-out theology of death would be better prepared and have more resources available for dealing with a severe loss than the person who has never thought much about death or has an illogical or inconsistent theology of death.

Pastoral counselors have made a reasonable argument for this point of view.¹⁶ Viktor E. Frankl has also suggested that a person's meaning-system was of critical importance in determining his/her adjustment to the hardships of a concentration camp.¹⁷ An analysis of

¹⁶See "Meaning-systems" in Chapter two of this dissertation.

¹⁷See Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul (New York: Knopf, 1953).

Pauline theology has also strongly suggested that how a person understands the nature of life, death and God (his/her theology) colors how he/she responds to loss and death. There seems to be strong agreement that a person's meaning-system should play a vital role in helping to resolve this "lapse of meaning" associated with the grief process. If this is true, this line of argument would strongly suggest that a person's meaning-system is a significant independent variable in the grief process. It is not necessarily tied to the full and free expression of grief emotions.

While both perspectives have suggested that a person's meaning-system is an important variable in helping griever's resolve the meaning dimension of their grief, no one has precisely explained how this occurs or what the criteria are by which one could evaluate a meaning-system to see if it would stand the test of a severe crisis. What type of meaning-system will provide the resources and knowledge necessary for assisting a grieving person to resolve his/her meaning crisis? Conversely, what type of a meaning-system will not provide a grieving person with the necessary resources and knowledge for resolving his/her crisis?

One attempt to answer this question by modern psychology was the studies of prisoner-of-war and concentration camp survivors.¹⁸ Here it was found that a person's personal meaning-system was a significant factor in helping him/her to endure the hardships of an

¹⁸See "Meaning-system" in Chapter two of this dissertation for a review of this literature.

imprisonment. A person's meaning-system functioned to strengthen the individual by providing him/her with a sense of purpose, with a hope in the future and with a confidence in their comrades. It also provided an escape from the present suffering by fostering past pleasant memories of that from which one is currently separated. Further, it functioned to deny the finality of the loss by promising future rewards if one just endures. In these cases such a denying was appropriate and reality-oriented.

Interestingly, it was also suggested on the basis of these studies that the content of a person's meaning-system mattered very little compared to the strength of it. The Communist meaning-system functioned as well as the Christian meaning-system. The important variable was the strength with which the beliefs were held. Paul would probably critique modern psychology at this point. Paul would not object that the strength of a person's beliefs was an important variable. For Paul, however, the content of a meaning-system matters as much as or even more than the strength with which it is held. Paul would argue that the Christian meaning-system is better equipped than any other meaning-system to facilitate growth in times of loss, precisely because of its unique and liberating content.

It must be remembered that Paul had abundant personal experience with various meaning-systems. He lived in a time when many political, philosophical and religious meaning-systems were competing for dominance. He personally "converted" from one great and complex meaning-system (Judaism) to another (Christianity). On the basis of his experience, Paul's argument might have been presented like this:

first, Paul would probably argue that religious meaning-systems are inherently better equipped than political or philosophical meaning-systems to deal with loss and death. This is so because religious meaning-systems include an eternal element that can give an individual resources for transcending the momentary hardships and losses of this time and place. Secondly, Paul would argue that the Judaeo-Christian meaning-systems include an eternal element that can give an individual resources for transcending the momentary hardships and losses of this time and place. Secondly, Paul would argue that the Judaeo-Christian meaning-systems are inherently better equipped than other religious systems to deal with loss and death. This is so because the Judaeo-Christian meaning-systems offer an individual a God who is not only eternal, transcending the losses of time and place, but loving. If God is loving, an individual can be reassured that life is good and that the future can be good, even when the present is painful.

Finally, Paul would argue that the Christian meaning-system is better equipped than the Jewish meaning-system to deal with loss and death. This is so because the Christian meaning-system relates salvation exclusively to God's grace and to personal faith. For Paul, growth in times of loss is facilitated not by a rigid legalism but by "self-surrender" (faith) to a loving and grace-ful God. This insight into God's nature was revealed supremely in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ's personal death and resurrection was also the example of how God brings new life out of "death" through the medium of self-surrender and grace. Thus Paul would counter modern psychology's contention that the content of a person's meaning-system

matters little compared to the strength with which the beliefs are held. He would argue that it is the Christian meaning-system's very content that makes it better equipped to facilitate growth in time of loss.

Up to this point this dialogue has focused exclusively on the role of meaning-systems in times of temporary losses. The prisoner-of-war studies were studies in which the losses were perceived to be temporary. As noted earlier, Paul also perceived of losses as ultimately temporary. All losses would soon be restored in the Messianic Age. The question of meaning-systems' role in times of loss where those losses are final has not been sufficiently examined. Consequently, the precise question of meaning-systems' role in facilitating the grief process has also been left untouched. There is an absence of information on this issue. Neither Pauline theology nor life-span psychology have been helpful with this precise question. It is the suspicion of this author that when this question is examined, the issue will boil down to a question of salugenetic religion. What kind of religious beliefs or meaning-systems promote the free expression of emotion and what kind of beliefs block it? Yet to date there has been very little data on this precise question from either Paul or life-span psychology. There is not enough information with which they can dialogue on this issue. Therefore, the question of meaning-system's relationship to the grief process must remain unresolved.

Faith in Life or Faith in God?

This dissertation also began with the question: "In times of loss and death does faith (understood as trust) help facilitate the

bereaved person's grief process?" It needs to be remembered that faith has been defined in this dissertation as a sense of trust in life or in a given segment of reality. Faith as so understood is essentially pre-cognitive, as opposed to meaning-system which was defined as primarily cognitive in nature. Obviously, faith and meaning-system are closely related.

Earlier the points of agreement between Erikson and Paul were discussed. It will be remembered that both Erikson and Paul confirmed that faith (defined as trust) was an important factor in enabling people to grow in times of loss. Both individuals characterized faith as a kind of "self-surrender" which made it particularly appropriate for people facing the finitude of their own resources in times of loss and death. Both individuals also drew a close connection between faith and meaning-system. The basic conflict between these two individuals also revolves around the issue of faith's relationship to a specific meaning-system. Is it possible to have faith in the abstract without a meaning-system? Or must faith be intricately tied to a meaning-system? And if so, are there certain meaning-systems that are better faith-facilitators than others?

Erikson has acknowledged the close relationship between basic trust and organized religion or meaning-systems. For Erikson faith is the religious expression of basic trust. Basic trust makes faith possible. Organized religion with its meaning system gives cognitive expression to the pre-cognitive basic trust. Again, basic trust makes organized religion possible. In this way basic trust is "pre" or prior to meaning-system. Conversely, one of organized religion's main

functions is to periodically renew basic trust. So, in another way, basic trust and meaning-system are interdependent. Yet, for Erikson the emphasis is upon basic trust being prior to meaning-system.

Paul would object to this Eriksonian argument. Pauline theology strongly agrees with Erikson that faith and meaning-system are interdependent. In fact, Paul would probably suggest that they cannot be essentially divided. They cannot exist without each other. Paul would probably also acknowledge that understanding the pre-cognitive origins of faith in the human infant is a helpful corrective to most religious understandings of faith. Faith does not just happen. It is built upon a pre-cognitive sense of trust that finds its origins in the first year of life. It is also helpful to realize that faith has a history, a development history. Repeated experiences of basic trust strengthen faith and the potential for faith; just as repeated experiences of basic mistrust block faith.

From the perspective of Pauline theology, however, Erikson's argument can be criticized for de-emphasizing the power and the ability of meaning-system to create and foster basic trust. Erikson makes this error because he indiscriminately lumps all meaning-systems together under the label "organized religion" and describes them all as having in common the periodical childlike surrender to a Provider. For Paul not all religions are equally trust-creating. The content of a particular meaning-system or religion matters greatly. Organized religion or meaning-system has more power to influence the creation and strengthening of basic trust or mistrust than Erikson seems to allow them, and sometimes even the power to create trust against evidence to

the contrary.

For Paul the Christian meaning-system is better equipped to create and sustain faith (or basic trust) than all other meaning-systems. The Christian meaning-system understands that people can have trust in life or in the future because God is trustworthy. Life or the future is not inherently trustworthy, but God is trustworthy. When one trusts in God, his/her sense of trust is more secure. This is especially true in times of loss and death which are inherently distrustful experiences. At such times when life is experienced as distrustful, one's trust (or faith) needs to be rooted in "something else" than can transcend life's distrustful moments. For Paul faith must be faith in God.

Erikson has suggested that basic trust continues to play a role in fostering developmental growth throughout the human life cycle. He did not however describe in detail how this occurs. Likewise, Paul has also made a strong case for the importance of faith or trust in God as a pre-condition for all spiritual growth. Yet, Paul did not exactly describe how this occurs either. Building upon the inferences and suggestions of these two perspectives, this author has speculated on the dynamics of this process.

All growth, whether developmental or spiritual, involves an element of risk. Both kinds of growth to some extent involve leaving behind the old and embracing the new. These items might be old and new attachments, old and new habits, or self-understandings, or attitudes, or friends, or values. For every step in growth, whether experienced as a sudden or gradual change, involves insecurity. It is "risky" to

let go of the old and familiar and attempt to move forward to the new and unknown. Actually, there are two risks--the risk of leaving the old and the risk of entering the new. Grief has to do with the former process. Yet in actuality both risks are a part of the same growth process and reflect the same fear--the fear of change.

There has been some evidence for this understanding of the dynamics of growth from both perspectives. It will be remembered that from the life-span perspective, Otto Rank described a similar dual-force understanding of each developmental change.¹⁹ He argued that each developmental change had a psychological "push and pull"; a dynamic rooted in the common fear of separation. Similarly, from the perspective of Pauline theology, it will be remembered that Paul chose Abraham as the prototype of faith. For Paul Abraham's faith was expressed as the courage to risk. He risked when he left home. He risked when he offered to sacrifice his son. For Paul faith is the courage to take a risk, courage grounded in obedience. This "risk-taking" is possible because one trusts in God and in God's faithfulness.

Every step of growth involves a risk. This is especially true of the bereaved person who must risk letting go and risk learning something new. What enables such a person to risk? Paul and Erikson would suggest that faith (as trust) is at least a partial answer. A sense of faith or trust helps a person still feel that life is good, even in the face of loss and death. He/she can believe that life is good and will

¹⁹See "Faith as Basic Trust" in Chapter three of this dissertation or Otto Rank, The Trauma of Birth (London: Kegan Paul, French, Trubner, 1929), p. 25ff.

be good again. Therefore he/she can risk to grieve and risk to enter into the new.

In order for faith (or trust) to be growth-facilitating in times of loss, it must enable the bereaved person to transcend the risk involved in growth. What kind of faith enables a person to do this? Erikson suggests that a basic trust in "the goodness, consistency and predictability of life" is enough. Paul argues that faith (as trust) is not adequate unless it is grounded in "something else." For Paul this "something else" needs to be something that is ultimately good, consistent and predictable (to use Erikson's criteria). Paul would propose that the best entity of that description is God. God alone is ultimately loving (good), eternal (consistent) and faithful (predictable). Faith or trust in God strengthens and deepens simple basic trust in life. Thus, faith or trust to the extent that it is trust in God becomes even more effective as a facilitator of the grief-growth process.

Paul would go on to argue that one way that faith in God is a better facilitator of the grief-growth process than the simple Eriksonian basic trust in life, is that faith in God can transcend a person's history of trustful or mistrustful experiences. Erikson himself has acknowledged that there is no absolute basic trust (in this life). Everyone has a relative ratio of basic trust to basic mistrust. Life is full of mistrustful events. In a time of loss and death, a person's ability to call upon his/her basic trust as a resource for growth is conditioned upon his/her previous history of trustable experiences that give rise to his/her present ratio of basic trust to basic mistrust.

What if a person has not had a strong history of trustful experiences? How then does he/she trust? In short, a person is a product of his/her psycho-social developmental history. Couple this fact with the fact that any severe loss experience is in itself an experience of mistrust in which life is felt to be evil, inconsistent and unpredictable. A person who has a history of mistrustful experiences or a person whose basic trust was shattered by a shocking death too severe to grow through is doomed to failure.

In contrast, faith or trust in God can help such a person transcend that particular history of mistrustful experiences, and/or transcend the blow of mistrust caused by the present loss, to still grow in spite of the moment or in spite of his/her history. This "inspite of" quality is in part what Paul means by faith. One's faith or trust is not based on present reality, but based on God. It is based in God's faithfulness and trustworthiness. When life has ceased to be faithful or trustworthy, God still is. Therefore, faith or trust in God can transcend life. It is still able to be facilitative of a person's grief-growth process on occasions wherein simple Eriksonian basic trust would be inadequate.

Therapeutic Communities: The Church or Growth Groups?

This dissertation began with the question: "In times of loss does a supportive community help facilitate the bereaved person's grief process?" This question was examined from the perspective of modern psychology, including life-span psychology, and from the perspective of Pauline theology. There were several significant points of agreement

that were summarized in an earlier section. Both perspectives confirmed the crucial importance of community as a facilitative factor. They both confirmed that the character of the community mattered more than its mere presence. Communities characterized by loving, empathic attitude toward one another were more facilitative of a bereaved person's grief process than those communities characterized by an indifferent and condescending attitude. Besides these points of basic agreement, Paul and modern psychology have several points of disagreement regarding the most facilitative kind of community.

Paul advocates that the church as a community is a more effective growth-facilitator of a bereaved person's grief process than is an otherwise secular growth group. Paul would not question that valid growth can occur in a growth group. His argument would be that the church is potentially a better growth facilitator than an otherwise secular group. Paul suggests that the church is more than just an association of people, however loving and however bound by a common purpose. For Paul the church is created, sustained and permeated by God. This "extra plus" in the church as opposed to other secular communities, offers several unique advantages as a growth-facilitating community.

First, the church has resources for helping people grow through the meaning-crisis that often accompanies a severe loss. Bereaved persons often find themselves struggling with degrees of hopelessness, existential anxiety or meaninglessness as a result of the loss of a loved one. The church is well equipped to deal with this spiritual dimension too. The church has traditions, rituals, beliefs and other resources that can aid a bereaved person, beyond just providing support and a

place to ventilate feelings. The church potentially can help a bereaved person grow spiritually as well as emotionally as a result of his/her loss. If this is true, this argument would suggest that the church, unlike secular growth groups, has the potential to be a significant independent variable, as well as a dependent variable toward facilitating a person's grief process.

Secondly, Paul would argue that God in the form of the Holy Spirit is uniquely present and at work in the church. This is not to exclude God's presence from other communities, but in the church community the willful acknowledgement and openness to God's direction makes the church as such unique. By acknowledging and being open to God's creative activity, the community of faith maximizes the growth potential of its members. This assumes that God is ultimately the author and creative element in all growth. From Paul's perspective growth is not an automatic, predictable unfolding of a predetermined blueprint, but a totally new, creative process, unique to each individual. Each step in growth is a "new creation." God, as the author of all growth occasionally surprises people. Acknowledging this additional dimension and being open to it gives the community of faith or the church potentially an additional advantage as a growth-facilitating community.

Thirdly, Paul would argue that the church is potentially a better growth-facilitator than other secular groups because Christians potentially do a better job of accepting and being empathic with a bereaved person's emotions. Christians acknowledge and are open to a God who is best defined as Love. Christians have as their example par

excellence Christ's loving act of sacrifice on the cross. Christians adopt as their common purpose the desire to be more loving and accepting. Furthermore, Christians are people who have keenly experienced the love of God and, as modern psychology itself argues, people who are loved are better able to love others. For all of these reasons Paul might suggest that the community of faith, the church, is potentially better able to be a growth-facilitating environment than other secular groups.

Modern psychology would be suspicious of Paul's contentions without substantial empirical evidence. It may be that the church can facilitate spiritual growth in addition to emotional growth. It may also be that a collective acknowledging of God does indirectly aid growth. It may also be that Christians are potentially better able to embody an attitude of love and empathy. In all of these cases modern psychology would ask for proof. Modern psychology would also caution Paul not to forget the primary variable which is a loving and empathic attitude. Unless a church or a community first embodies this attitude and embodies it well, all additional advantages are for naught. Paul would certainly agree. His argument was on the basis of potential, not actuality. Love must always be embodied in real people and in a specific time and place.

Rituals: Vehicles of Grief or Instruction?

This dissertation began also with the question: "In times of loss and death, do rituals and the full participation in rituals facilitate a person's grief process and thereby promote growth?" In reviewing

the previous research literature on grief it was noted that a few grief studies supported the general conclusion that rituals were facilitative to the extent that they encouraged the free and full expression of the grief feelings of their participants. Life-span psychology did also confirm this conclusion through an analysis of the rites of passage. Van Gennep, among others argued that rites of passage actually facilitate to some extent an individual's transition from one life-stage to another.

It was the opinion of this author that rites of passage in part accomplish this task by providing a structure in which the free expression of emotions can be encouraged. In particular, the free expression of grief feelings associated with the loss dimension of any developmental change, would facilitate an individual's grief process and thereby promote developmental growth. It was recognized that besides encouraging the free expression of emotions, rituals can also prescribe and expect certain emotional displays in a way that actually blocks the authentic release of emotions. The balance between inner need and outer expectation is always a delicate one and depends on many cultural and individualistic factors. Barring this qualification, however, it is still possible to assert that rituals do provide a structure in which their participants can grieve. By "structure" this author means a set of guidelines, limits and boundaries that allow a person to "let go" of his/her emotions with the security that the prescribed limits will keep him/her from being overwhelmed. So, rituals and in particular rites of passages, can be facilitative of the grief process to the extent that they: 1) encourage the free expression of grief feelings, and 2) provide

a ritualistic structure that allows the participants to feel safe about emoting.

These researchers also agree that in modern urban societies most rituals no longer accurately reflect the values, meaning-systems and temperaments of most people. Society has changed so fast that rituals have not caught up with the personal value and meaning-systems of most people. So, the issue becomes not so much the availability of ritualistic observations in times of loss, but the character of those rituals. To the extent that rituals do encourage their participants to emote, they are indeed facilitative. Yet, many rituals in urban societies have ceased to be facilitative because they have ceased to reflect and to relate meaningfully to their participants. They are more concerned with maintaining order, "protecting" people from pain, masking the realities of death and loss or promoting some theological point of view. To the extent that rituals are so characterized, they cease to be facilitative. For the most part, the primary purpose of rituals should be the fullest possible outpouring of grief. When rituals fulfill this purpose, they facilitate a person's grief process.

There is not much evidence from Pauline theology of ritual in times of loss and death. The only bit of evidence is in 1 Corinthians where Paul uses the ritual of baptism of the dead to bolster his argument concerning the resurrection of the dead. It can be assumed from this passage that Paul did not openly dispute the value of grief rituals. It can also be inferred from his treatment of the tongues controversy that he would favor that all displays of grief be handled "decently and in order." He would not favor the wild and volatile

traditions of the "wailing women." This is so largely because he believed that in the Messianic Age (soon to arrive) all losses would be restored. The Christian's grief can be tempered by hope.

For Paul the primary way of comforting the bereaved is by imparting knowledge, hopeful knowledge about the coming parousia. This is his primary concern. If he saw any intrinsic value to rituals it was not in their ability to facilitate grief, but as an opportunity to teach. The content of rituals becomes all important. Rituals have value because of their close interconnection with meaning-system. They are instruments of instruction.

This understanding of rituals, based on implication as it is, stands in contrast with how modern psychology understands ritual's function and value. To modern psychology ritual's primary purpose should be the fullest outpouring of grief, thereby facilitating the participant's grief process. To Paul, ritual's primary purpose should be instruction and the imparting of new knowledge. Obviously, this conflict over how rituals are to be understood and used is not confined to the ancient world, nor to the modern. The conflict dominates the current critiques of the funeral industry. It should also be noted that these two understandings of ritual are not mutually exclusive. It might indeed be possible to meet one's spiritual need for instruction while also meeting one's emotional need for emotional ventilation. Such a blending of needs would take the art and skill of the ritual leader.

D. UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EACH PERSPECTIVE

From the Life-Cycle Perspective

The unique contributions from the life-cycle perspective include the developmental perspective itself. For example, Erikson's understanding of basic trust is an important contribution to comprehensive understanding of faith and its role in emotional health. Erikson suggests that religious faith does not develop in the abstract, but is previewed in a person's sense of basic trust. This basic trust itself originates in the first year of life, and is renewed periodically throughout the life-cycle. In other words, faith has a developmental history. It is something that grows and develops. It does not just happen. This developmental perspective also suggests that a person's capacity for religious faith is (at least in part) dependent upon his/her previous developmental history of basic trust experiences. A person with a developmental history of mistrust experiences is potentially less able to understand or respond to religious faith. Conversely, a person with a developmental history of trustful experiences is potentially better able to respond to religious faith. This author would add that religious faith cannot be totally reduced to or explained by Erikson's basic trust. Nevertheless, it is an important and unique contribution to understand faith as having a developmental history.

Another important corollary to this same developmental perspective on faith is to an awareness that faith changes character throughout a person's life-cycle.²⁰ Religious faith for a five-year old

²⁰This point has been described in detail by LeRoy Aden, "Faith

person is not the same as for an eighteen-year old person. Nor is faith the same in a thirty-five year old person as it is for a seventy-year old person. Faith changes emphases and character throughout one's life time. As the life-contexts and needs of persons change throughout their life-cycles, they emphasize and appreciate different aspects of faith. For example, a seventy-year old person, facing the meaning-crisis of later life, defines faith as faith in the cognitive belief systems. A pre-school child who cannot grasp the cognitive beliefs, experiences faith in the faith-fulness of his/her parents. Conversely that child's parents might define faith as the courage to risk loving and caring for another human being. There are of course great variations depending on culture and individual personalities. Nevertheless, it is the important and unique contribution to understand that faith changes character throughout one's life-cycle.

Another important corollary is that healing is developmentally conditioned. The ability to grieve is a developmentally learned skill. If a person has many successful experiences at grieving the thousands of little losses of life, then he/she is well-prepared to "know how to" grieve the severe losses. Conversely, a person who had had no exposures to loss or how to grieve, is ill-prepared to deal with severe losses. This is another reason why the cultural trend toward the isolation and denial of death, especially from children is so dangerous. People grow up not knowing how to grieve. So in times of severe loss

and the Developmental Cycle," Pastoral Psychology, XXIV, 3 (Spring 1976), 215-30.

they are without the resources and confidence that comes from years of successfully coping with losses.

Another application of this developmental perspective is in the area of meaning-system (which has been one of the foci of this dissertation). Here too the life-cycle perspective understands meaning-system as a developmental phenomenon. It reaches its developmental climax in the last stage of life, wherein the conflict between ego integrity and despair becomes acute. This meaning crisis is also previewed in every other developmental crisis throughout the life-cycle. This means that there is a meaning dimension or "mini" meaning-crisis in all developmental crises. The need for meaning and the threat of meaninglessness (and hopelessness) is sharp at all the points of transition, loss and crisis. It can be deduced then that the need for religion should be especially acute at points of developmental transition. This perspective on the meaning crisis or meaning dimension is an unique and valuable insight.

Another important and unique contribution from the life-span perspective is its understanding of ritual in the life-cycle. The particular type of ritual associated with the life-cycle transitions is the rite of passage. Anthropological studies of rites of passage have isolated their remarkable and crucial role in facilitating the transition of a person from one life-stage to another. All rites of passage embody three phases: separation, transition, and reincorporation, which confirms the presence of loss and grief as one element in the growth process. These rites facilitate a person's developmental growth by giving him/her (and others) "a place" in which to grieve. The ritual

prescribes the structure, boundaries, intensity and limits of the grief process. Usually such grief expressions are intense, relatively short, and well defined by the ritual. In this way rituals actually facilitate a person's grief-growth process. Furthermore, when completed, the ritual, being basically a social event, "announces" and confers on the individual his/her new status. The process is thereby completed. This fascinating insight into the powerful and facilitative role that ritual can play in developmental growth is an unique and important contribution from the life-span perspective. It offers professional scholars a perspective and a criteria by which they can evaluate the dynamics and effectiveness of modern rituals.

From Pauline Theology

1. The eschatological perspective on loss and growth. There are several important and unique contributions from the Pauline perspective. First, Paul's eschatological understanding of loss offers an unique perspective on loss which is not included in other secular perspectives. Like most of his Christian contemporaries, Paul understood that human existence as he knew it was fading away. The new Messianic Age was already dawning and would soon fully arrive. As a part of that new age, there would be an universal and final judgment. Yet, just as the Messianic Age is already present in this life, so too, judgment is also already present and operative in this life. For Paul an "eschatological occurrence" in this life, is any experience in which life seems short or in which death seems near. Obviously, loss experiences are very vivid examples of eschatological occurrences. Loss

experiences are "little deaths." They are experiences in which people keenly feel their finitude.

If Paul's understanding of loss experiences as carrying an eschatological dimension is correct, then judgment should be present in all loss experiences. Based on modern empirical clinical data, this seems to be true. Faced with severe losses (or the threat thereof), people often re-assess their life and values. They judge themselves in light of their eschatological awareness. As a consequence, many people make significant revisions in their values and life-styles. Judgment becomes a catalyst for spiritual growth.

Paul's understanding of loss as an eschatological occurrence vividly accents the presence and role of judgment in facilitating spiritual growth in times of loss and death. This perspective enables Paul to understand that judgment is built into all loss experiences and to the extent that judgment becomes self judgment it can facilitate spiritual growth. Further Paul understands that these "little judgments" are related ultimately to God's final judgment. In a sense God's final judgment will only confirm the thousands of "little judgments" of this life. Judgment is a continuum from this age to the next. This is so because eschatology is also a continuum. The eschaton is something yet to come and something already present and operative. This eschatological understanding of loss and judgment is unique to Paul and offers an unique and valuable perspective on loss of spiritual growth.

2. The role of God in grief and growth. A second unique contribution from Pauline theology is Paul's understanding of the presence

and role of God in grief and growth. Paul "sees" God uniquely present in times of loss and grief. For Paul God is the agent of comfort and healing. God is the author of all growth. For Paul the miracle of bringing new growth and new life out of death experiences is attributable to the resurrection power of God which was supremely illustrated and released in Christ's resurrection. Paul is convinced by doctrine and personal experience that even in the times of severest pain and sorrow, "God is at work." God is present and working on behalf of new life.

Because God is present and at work even in the darkest of hours, Paul can have confidence in the future. Hope is possible. The future belongs to God. This is part of Paul's eschatological understanding of God. God is not just present in the pain of today but also in tomorrow's potential new life. God is not only Lord of the present, but Lord of the future. God is God of the potential as well as of the actual. This applies to the single individual as well as to the cosmos.

This future is totally open because God is infinite in possibilities. There is no predetermined blueprint for the cosmos or for the individual. Each person's potential is genuinely creative and new. It will be created jointly through the creative activity of God and the hard work of the individual. Yet, while totally open, individuals can still have confidence in the future because God, who rules the future, is good. Therefore the future is basically good. Each person's potential toward which God lures them is a good potential--a totally new, creative, exciting and self-fulfilling possibility.

Paul's eschatological sense of God's reign in the future can be

applied to the occasion of the individual bereaved person. Paul can reassure such a person that even amid pain and sorrow, God is present and at work bringing growth out of death. Furthermore, Paul can therefore affirm that the future is full of infinite good possibilities for this person. Life can be good again, because the future belongs to God and God is good. Thus Paul offers to the bereaved person not only a vision of the present activity of God, but a hope for a better future grounded in God. God pulls the bereaved person towards a better future, as well as comforting him/her in the present pain.

This understanding of God's presence and role in grief and growth stands in contrast to modern psychology which claims to be totally secular in orientation. Modern psychology prefers to account for the miracles of growth and new life by scientific or chance explanations. It should be noted that this understanding of God's role in grief and growth also stands in contrast to certain religious orientations. Some people or religious traditions understand God as a cosmic Caesar who wills or allows all things including evil. They struggle with the painful questions of how such a loving God can "allow" sorrow and death. They experience God as uninvolved and "above" their personal tragedy and grief process. Paul's vision of God's presence and activity in times of loss stands in contrast to both of these orientations and offers an unique contribute to a full understanding of grief and growth. This unique understanding of God's role in grief and growth seems to be theologically sound and psychologically therapeutic.

3. The interrelationship of love, grief and faith. A third

unique contribution from Pauline theology is an understanding of the interrelationship of love, grief and faith. This understanding has been largely implicit in earlier discussions. This author will attempt to make it explicit here and by so doing, the uniqueness of this vision should become apparent.

Paul agrees with modern psychology that humans have an innate drive or need to care. They emotionally invest themselves in all sorts of people, places or ideas. Paul goes one step further by refining the nature of love or care. He describes the ideal example of love as agape. One characteristic of agape, as shown in Christ's example, is vulnerability. He further cautions against the abuses of emotional attachments or "love" in both intensity and object. Paul also goes one step further than modern psychology by arguing that humans not only do care, but should care. God desires that humans should love God and each other after the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. Paul therefore pushes humans toward greater love as the fulfillment of God's commandments, and he encourages humans to love in a vulnerable way (agape).

Yet, Paul also realizes, as noted in earlier chapters, that loss and death are an inevitable part of human existence. Therefore the person who loves more as Paul teaches inevitably will hurt more. The more a person cares, especially in the vulnerable example of agape, the more a person will feel pain. Greater love makes possible greater pain. The greater the love, the greater is the risk of sorrow. It seems irrational and uncharacteristic of God that He, through Paul, would ask humans to do something that will inevitably lead to greater

pain and sorrow. How does Paul account for this?

For Paul the answer to this question is faith. Faith, as described in earlier chapters, is a trust in God. By trusting in God and in His goodness, the bereaved person can recover and grow from his/her loss. This is possible because the bereaved person trusts that God is at work, bringing new life out of death. Theoretically, such a bereaved person, through his/her faith in God, recovers quicker and easier than he/she might otherwise have, and is thus able to love again with greater intensity, speed, and ease than he/she might otherwise have. Therefore faith makes possible greater love.

God does desire that humans love more. God also acknowledges that this "style" brings with it greater risks and pain. God's only provision is faith. Through faith in God, humans can be assured that when loss and death occur, God will comfort them and enable them to recover and grow quicker and easier than they might otherwise have. Faith is not a way of avoiding pain. One must still love; one must still risk; and one will still hurt. Yet, God's promise is that He will be present with a person in his/her pain and will work to bring growth out of the loss.

In this way love, grief and faith are interrelated. They are all part of the same sequential continuum. They make each other possible. Greater love makes possible greater grief. Greater grief necessitates greater faith. In return, greater faith makes possible greater love. This author has greatly oversimplified this complex interrelationship, but he has done so in order to point out the sequential process involving these three entities. Paul has implicitly

described this sequence. His vision, however vague and scattered, is an important and unique contribution to a full understanding of grief and growth.

E. CONCLUSIONS

Community as a Facilitative Factor

This dissertation has considered the question, "In times of loss does a supportive community help facilitate the bereaved person's grief process?" This question was examined from the perspective of modern psychology, including life-span psychology, and from the perspective of Pauline theology. The evidence from both perspectives strongly suggested that community was a significant variable to the extent that the people in that community were able to encourage and accept the bereaved person's free expression of grief feelings, especially of negative feelings. The more other people encouraged and accepted a bereaved person's grief feelings, the more that that person's grief process was facilitated.

In other words the key variable is not the mere presence of a community, but the character of that community. Communities characterized by a loving, empathic attitude toward one another are better able to facilitate a bereaved person's grief process than these communities characterized by an indifferent and condescending attitude. This variable is important not just for bereaved persons, but for all people. Such a community is an important health-maintenance and growth-facilitating variable for all people.

The research into these variables has led to a helpful refinement regarding this author's understanding of the grief process itself. It has become clear that the most facilitative kind of grief process is not an absolute and incessant expression of one's grief feelings. The human psyche cannot deal with pain constantly. The most facilitative kind of grief process is the full and free expression of grief feelings, alternated by periods of mitigation, support and comfort. This is an important refinement that alters the original research question posed in this dissertation. This insight also confirms the importance of the growth formula (love + confrontation = growth). Thus, the most growth-facilitative kind of community is a community that both confronts a person with the reality of his/her loss and also comforts him/her in his/her pain. This might be described as "empathy with a purpose" or empathy with a sprinkling of confrontation. This is the most facilitative kind of community.

Paul's contention that the church can potentially be a "better" growth facilitating community than an otherwise secular community is basically a solid argument. It does however lack empirical proof. (His contentions would make interesting studies). In particular, the contention that the church is a better growth-facilitator because it has resources to deal with the meaning crisis is valid. The research of this dissertation has confirmed the presence of a meaning dimension in all severe grief reactions. Theoretically the church has "an additional plus" in its ability to deal with the spiritual dimensions as well as with the emotional. Thus the church, like any religious community, can potentially be a modest independent variable (resolving the

meaning crisis), as well as an important dependent variable (facilitating the free expression of grief feelings). The priority of the variables however is clearly with the free and full expression of grief feelings. A church that blocks grief feelings would also cripple if not block any effective influence it was having on the resolution of the meaning crisis.

In reality many people probably "join" a non-religious community in order to freely express their grief feelings, while still looking to the church to tell them what it all means. How much more effective it would be to have both dimensions present in the same community of the church. Yet, in order to actualize this unique potential the church must first embody an encouraging and accepting attitude toward the free and full expression of grief feelings, especially negative feelings.

Rituals as a Facilitative Factor

This dissertation has considered the question, "In times of loss, do rituals help facilitate a bereaved person's grief process?" This question was examined from the perspective of modern psychology including life-span psychology and from the perspective of Pauline theology. The evidence from modern psychology, including life-span psychology strongly suggests that rituals are a significant factor toward the facilitation of a person's grief process. This is so to the extent that rituals become vehicles that encourage and allow people to freely grieve. Conversely, ritualistic observances that discourage or block the participants' grief feelings are non-facilitative. Two additional

principles are also true. First, people who fully participate in rituals get more out of them.²¹ Generally, the more participative rituals are, the more effective they become as grief-growth facilitators. Secondly, rituals must be relevant to their participants. Rituals that no longer reflect the values, language and beliefs of their participants block full participation and thus also block the free expression of grief feelings.

Life-span psychology has been especially helpful in defining the exact nature and function of the life-cycle ritual, called the rite of passage. The analysis of the rite of passage revealed that rituals are growth facilitating not only because they encourage the full expression of emotions, but also because they provide a safe structure in which to do so. This structure quality in rituals, includes its time-limitations, its boundaries, its educational function, its prescription of social acceptability, and its regulated stages. In a sense structure is supportive and comforting. Again, the growth formula reveals itself. Rituals can be facilitative of a person's grief-growth process when they both comfort and support (structure) and also encourage the painful confrontation with reality (expression of emotions). These two criteria and their relative balance govern the effectiveness of rituals as a grief facilitating variable.

Paul's contention that rituals can and should also be used as vehicles of instruction is valid. The research of this dissertation

²¹By "participation" this author means emotional as well as physical participation.

has confirmed the presence of a meaning or spiritual dimension to all severe grief reactions which must be resolved via a person's meaning-system. Rituals are inseparably bound to meaning-systems. Rituals cannot be divorced from their content. Rituals are the vehicles²² through which the resources of one's meaning-system are made available to the bereaved person. The two conflicting purposes of rituals--as vehicles for the expression of grief feelings and as vehicles for instruction--need not be mutually exclusive. A skilled and sensitive ritual leader can facilitate a full outpouring of grief while also speaking to the participants' spiritual or meaning needs. For example the singing of emotion-laden hymns at funerals is often a good way of releasing emotions while also highlighting certain symbols and beliefs. Obviously ritual leaders will need training in order to effectively accomplish this delicate merging of purposes.

It should be underscored that rituals as a variable is inseparable from the other three variables. As noted rituals cannot be separated from its meaning-system. There is no ritual without content. Likewise faith cannot be separated from meaning-system. There is no faith in the abstract. Again, rituals are by definition social events. They cannot be separated from community. Ritualistic observances are occasions that strengthen community and in return communities create, strengthen and sustain rituals. All four variables are intricately interwoven. To a great extent their effectiveness depends on their

²²It should be noted that the variable here is not rituals per se, but meaning-system. Rituals do not resolve meaning-crises but their content does.

weakest link. If for example meaning-system is growth blocking, this negative influence will permeate all other variables. Or if a community is growth blocking this will influence the effectiveness of all other variables. All four variables can reinforce or detract from each other.

Meaning-system as a Facilitative Factor

This dissertation has considered the question, "In times of loss does a person's meaning-system facilitate his/her grief?" This question has been examined from the perspective of modern psychology, including life-span psychology and from the perspective of Pauline theology. The evidence has been largely inconclusive.

The most important conclusion of this dissertation is the description and analysis of the meaning dimension of the grief process. In times of loss or death there is a temporary "lapse of meaning" for the bereaved person. This is particularly true in cases where the loss is severe. The symptoms of this meaning crisis include periods of hopelessness, existential anxiety, purposelessness and meaninglessness. Perceiving this meaning crisis in his readers, Paul focuses several sections of his letters toward meeting the need for meaning.

Given the significant evidence supporting the presence of a meaning dimension in severe grief reactions, it would seem logical to also conclude that a person's meaning system is a significant factor, positively or negatively, toward its resolution. It would seem logical for example that a person with a well-thought-out theology of death would be better equipped to deal with loss and death than a person of

an inconsistent or illogical theology of death. If this is true, then meaning-system would be a significant independent variable in the facilitation of a person's grief process. Unfortunately there is very little evidence, at least from life-span psychology and Pauline theology, to support this conclusion. This author suspects that attempts to prove this connection would immediately get caught in issues of salutogenic religion. Which beliefs or religions by their very content are health-producing and which are health-blocking?

Paul of course has proposed that the Christian religion by nature of its very content is inherently more growth-facilitating than other social-political or religious meaning-systems. For Paul those beliefs that are health-facilitating include the eternity of God, the unconditional love of God, the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ, the resurrection power of God, and God's reliance on faith alone for justification. For Paul beliefs that are health-blocking include a reliance on justification by works, an ethical system based on legalism, a comfort not grounded in an eschatological hope, a fatalistic view of human existence and an understanding of human nature that disavows human responsibility. This author would basically agree with Paul. In theory, the Christian religion does have some health facilitating beliefs that can be most effective in times of loss. Yet there is a big difference between these beliefs in the abstract and how these beliefs are interpreted and translated into practice. This author has personally witnessed certain Christian beliefs being interpreted in two totally contradictory ways. This author can only conclude that the evidence is inconclusive at this point.

One of the reasons why the evidence is so inconclusive on this variable is that both modern psychology and Pauline theology have largely considered the role of meaning-system in the context where the loss is perceived to be temporary. This was the case in the prisoners of war studies. This was largely the case in Paul's theology as well. In both contexts the thrust of a person's meaning-system takes on a different character. There is no thought of facing the finality of one's loss and facilitating the bereaved person's expression of his/her grief emotions. Instead the emphasis is placed on denying the finality of the loss and enduring the present sufferings until the losses can be restored. In this context a person's meaning-system can be considered to be effective, but in the context of the facilitation of a person's grief process this use of meaning-system would be growth-blocking.

There are cases where the losses are inherently temporary. In these cases this kind of use of meaning-system would be appropriate and even "healthy" in a temporary way, but otherwise the dangers are great. To this author's mind it is too easy for people to use meaning-system to "believe" that losses are only temporary when in fact they are not. The tendency to deny the reality and finality of loss is strong in all bereaved people especially in the first stages of shock. Meaning-systems that inherently encourage this trend are inherently growth-blocking. Meaning-systems that inherently accept the finality of losses and encourage them to adjust to this fact are inherently growth-producing. There are elements of both types of uses of meaning-systems in the Christian religion. The key issue is how accurately people perceive the nature of their loss at the start. This decision

will determine how they will use their meaning-system, either to help themselves "to endure" or to help themselves "to adjust."

Faith as a Facilitative Factor

This dissertation has considered the question, "In times of loss and death, does faith (understood as trust) help facilitate the bereaved person's grief process?" This question was examined from the perspectives of life-span psychology and Pauline theology. The arguments from both perspectives strongly suggest that faith is a significant variable but not necessarily as a dependent variable (helping the free expression of grief emotions).

Both perspectives have argued that faith or trust is an important factor in helping people to grow in times of loss. The "self-surrender" quality of faith seems especially relevant to people facing the finitude of their own resources in times of loss and death. All growth involves an element of risk and insecurity. It is "risky" to let go of the old and familiar and to attempt to move into the new and unknown. Faith or trust enables a person to take those risks easier than he/she might otherwise have. Faith gives an individual courage to leave the old and courage to enter into the new.

Paul's contention that faith in life is not adequate is basically valid. One must have faith in "something else" other than in life. Life as Erikson himself has described is basically changeable and unpredictable. In order to be most growth-facilitating faith must be grounded in "something else," something that transcends the unpredictability and changeableness of life. This author agrees with Paul

that God is indeed the best "something else." The eternal nature of God allows Him to transcend all of temporal life. The love of God guarantees that the future is full of good possibilities. Theoretically, faith in God is a better growth-facilitating variable than is simple faith in life.

While the argument has suggested a strong correlation between faith and growth, the faith variable has not been directly related to the full and free expression of grief emotions. The argument has suggested that faith is an independent variable, and not a dependent one. Furthermore the argument has been equally applicable to all kinds of growth, not just to the grief process. Yet this author believes that there is a kind of faith or trust necessary for a person to freely and fully grieve. It is a faith or trust in the grief process itself. Grieving requires a "letting go" of one's usual rational-social control mechanisms. It is a kind of self-surrender, "a trusting of the process."

This author believes that this kind of trusting would be strengthened by a faith in God. Understanding that God is present and active in the grief process would enable a bereaved person to trust the grief process more than he/she might otherwise have. Understanding also that God has created the human personality structures, including the grief process, would also be trust-creating. Bereaved people can trust the grief process, because they are confident that God has designed that process for good and is Himself present in that process, bringing new life out of loss. The ability to have faith in the process is an important element in grief's resolution. It is strengthened

by a faith in God.

There is another sense in which faith is applicable to the grief process. In times of great pain, many bereaved people swear that they will never love again. The question is not an idle one. In one form or another all people ask and answer this same question millions of times in their lives. "Shall I emotionally invest myself in this person and risk getting hurt? Or shall I hold back and 'play it safe'?" Christians are people who are encouraged to and do choose the first option more often than not. They can do so because of faith, faith in God. This faith is a faith that even if one does get hurt, God can transform the worse pain into growth and new life. This is the resurrection power of God. Believing and living as if this power is real will make a significant difference in one's ability to love and in one's ability to recover from loss. Faith in God can facilitate a person's ability to love and a person's ability to grieve. The two abilities are intricately interrelated, and maybe, in fact, the same ability.

Chapter 7

IMPLICATIONS FOR PASTORAL CARE AND SUGGESTIONS
FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The group was exhausted and when all insisted upon helping Terrie, I began to believe that maybe grieverers were unusually adept at aiding peers.

--Robert E. Kavanaugh¹

The final chapter of this dissertation will focus very briefly upon the implications of this research for pastoral care and suggestions for further research. Two qualifications need to be restated at this time. First, this dissertation has primarily been theory-building in nature. The research of this dissertation has not been based upon empirical research, although clinical material has been used for illustrative purposes. Consequently, the conclusions and implications of this research must be considered tentative, awaiting the empirical studies of future researchers. Secondly, this dissertation has primarily been exploratory in nature. It has sought to explore issues and relationships not previously dealt with in systematic ways. Consequently, this dissertation has raised more questions than it has answered. Yet, this author believes that the process of articulating and refining questions is an important part of the research process.

¹Robert E. Kavanaugh, Facing Death (Baltimore: Benguin, 1974), p. 93.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PASTORAL CARE

For the Church/Temple

To the extent that this dissertation has affirmed the facilitative qualities of community, ritual, meaning-system and faith it has underscored the tremendous potential and value of the church or temple as a growth-facilitating community. No other institution combines these four variables in its very self-definition and weekly practices. This author recognizes that these four variables were pre-selected by this author. Thus, the importance of these variables as growth facilitative factors is not comparative to other factors. There might be other factors that are more important. It also must be noted that this dissertation has not endorsed the absolute value of these factors. In all cases there were significant qualifications and in the case of a meaning-system, the evidence was for the most part inconclusive.

Nevertheless, one has to be impressed with the tremendous potential of the church/temple as a growth-facilitating community. A caring, emotion-accepting community set in the context of a religious institution has some additional advantages as a growth-facilitating factor. If such a community of people had a set of growth-facilitating rituals, a growth-facilitating meaning-system, and emphasized and practiced a growth-facilitating kind of faith or trust in God, how much more effective it would become as a grief-growth facilitating environment.

As a person with some experience with the church as an institution, this author must also acknowledge the non-growth-facilitating

ways that community, ritual, meaning-system and faith can be used. Religious meaning-systems can be used to encourage people to avoid their grief, pain and even the reality of their loss. Faith can be used as a catch-all term for a kind of fatalism that accepts everything as "God's will." Rituals can be used to maintain order, preach a sermon, or avoid the reality of the loss, instead of giving the participants an opportunity to grieve. Even community can be used as an instrument of group pressure, reinforcing allegiance and dependency to some particular doctrine, personality or life-stage. Like most institutions, the church can be used for the destruction of persons as well as the growth of persons. This dissertation has underscored the tremendous positive potential of the church for being a grief-growth facilitating environment.

There are two other indirect insights that underscore the potential of the church or similar religious community as a grief-growth facilitating environment. First, the perspective of life-span psychology has underscored the inevitability and universality of loss in the human life cycle. Life-cycle theorists have also argued that grief is therefore necessary and an essential ingredient in the maintenance of developmental health. The church/temple like no other institution has access to persons and families throughout their life cycle. The church/temple also has a cultural mandate to deal with emotional, interpersonal and spiritual issues. Thus the church is in a tremendous strategic position to help people deal with loss throughout their lives. Besides the obvious life crises of death and marriage, the church needs to look at the less dramatic losses and developmental transitions,

seeking to develop rituals and programs to help persons emotionally adjust to these changes. This task is of crucial importance, because how people learn to handle the "little" losses and deaths of life sets the pattern and establishes the resources for how they deal with major losses. In this sense the church's work with the "smaller" life losses would be preventative and educational, preparing people for the inevitable major losses. A major part of that preventative-educational task would be teaching people how to grieve.

Secondly, the church/temple like no other institution emphasizes and has access to families. Several researchers have highlighted the importance of the family as the primary institution through which people are educated in how to grieve. Children learn early the emotional orientations, rituals, faith and meaning-systems of their parents. Modern industrial urban societies are characterized by a social uprootedness and a breakdown of the family unit that parallels the decline of ritual, the rising mental health crisis and the decline in the influence of religious institutions. Without the traditional structures of rituals, family emotional models and religious training, people do not literally know how to grieve and have few resources for coping with the severe losses of human existence. The church/temple needs to work with families to create growth-facilitating rituals, affirm family models of emotional health, and strengthen spiritual resources for coping with loss. Such tasks, primarily in the area of preventative education, will better prepare future generations to cope with severe loss in emotionally effective ways.

For the Clergy

The clergy is of course the one profession outside of funeral directors that deal with the bereaved more often and over a longer term than any other. Clergy are in a strategic position to help bereaved people face their pain, grieve openly and bring growth out of loss. This dissertation has made a strong argument in favor of the bereaved facing and even embracing their pain. By immersing oneself in one's pain, a person fully engages him/herself in his/her grief process and thereby facilitates his/her grief. The important variable is helping the bereaved face openly and directly their pain. How well do clergy do this? Some research² on clergy and clergy-type personalities suggest that clergy are generally the type of personality that is conflict-avoidance, people-pleasing and non-assertive. In short, clergy tend to be better comforters than they do confronters. To the extent that this personality characteristic is true, individual clergy will have difficulty enabling the bereaved to directly face their pain, and thereby facilitate their grief. The situation is compounded by certain theological traditions which themselves mask the reality of loss and death. At times even in the situation of grief where their instincts tell them to take one approach, clergy may feel obligated to uphold the theological tradition and advice of their tradition. If clergy are to be effective grief-growth facilitators they need to strengthen their ability

²For example, see Margaretta K. Bowers, Conflicts of the Clergy (New York: Nelson, 1963); Glenn E. Whitlock, From Call to Service (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968).

and skills at personally dealing with and encouraging the open confrontation of pain.

The other central overriding conclusion that seems to color the effectiveness of all four variables is how well each variable encourages and accepts the free and full expression of emotions. This is the one common feature that indicates whether a particular variable is growth facilitating or not. If clergy are to be effective grief-growth facilitators, they too must be the kind of people that encourage and accept the free and full expression of grief emotions. The key factor is how well clergy accept and express their own emotions. Again it seems to this author that many clergy find great personal difficulty in encouraging and accepting strong emotions, particularly negative emotions like anger. In the face of anger or severe depression, such clergy feel the need to cheer up the bereaved. In both cases the most growth facilitating approach is to encourage and accept the free and full expression of emotions. In order for clergy to be effective grief-growth facilitators, they need to be the kind of persons that can encourage and accept strong emotions. And in order to be the kind of persons that can accept and encourage strong emotions in others, they must be able to accept and encourage strong emotions in themselves. In order to be an effective grief-facilitator for others they must be good facilitators of their own grief.

For Health Professionals

Often the bereaved hear it said that "time will heal." This dissertation strongly suggests that this statement is not true. It is

not the mere passing of time that heals, but the quality of time. The most effective healing process is the full and free expression of emotions. To some extent "talking out" these emotions is effective, but the most effective approach is the actual "re-living" of these experiences. A bereaved person must be fully engaged and actively involved in his/her own emotional process. This would suggest that the techniques of such therapeutic approaches as Gestalt therapy would be most effective. Therapists and other health professionals who work with the bereaved need to emphasize and to be trained in such active, re-living techniques.

Health professionals who work with the bereaved also need to be trained in the importance and use of spiritual resources. This dissertation confirmed the presence and importance of the meaning dimension to the grief process. A bereaved person will not be fully recovered until he/she has spiritually recovered as well. Health professionals cannot "avoid" these topics because of ignorance or prejudice. They must foster healing there too. The best approach, to this author's mind, is to include the clinically trained clergy person or pastoral counselors as a part of the health care team. This author would encourage mental health agencies to include pastoral counselors as an integral part of their therapeutic intervention.

This dissertation has also supported the importance of the self-help approach to helping the bereaved. The self-help philosophy advocates that the best means of helping a grieving person is in the context of a supportive community of other grieving persons. In such a context empathy is maximized and sympathy is minimized. The presence

and support of other grieving persons provides hope, models and appropriate limits. Health professionals need to recognize the effectiveness of this approach. The self-help approach requires of health professionals a de-centralized style of group leadership. Health professionals who do not recognize this requirement or insist on centralized leadership out of their own needs, will cease to be effective grief-growth facilitators.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Already several suggestions for future research have been made in the text and footnotes of earlier chapters. This concluding section will focus only on the highlights of earlier discussions and on those suggestions that currently consume the personal interest of this author. This section will also focus only on those suggestions that are unique to this dissertation.

This dissertation has primarily been theory-building in nature. While this dissertation did initially grow out of the clinical experience of this author, and while clinical material has been used for illustrative purposes, the primary thrust of this dissertation has been theory-building. Obviously, the next step is to do empirical research in the same area. This author would suggest that all four variables--community, ritual, meaning-system and faith--need to be subjected to the critical test of empirical research. Appropriate measuring instruments would have to be developed both for each variable and for the grief-growth process itself. Such a study should aim toward developing statistical correlations both for each variable and for their combined

effect.

Another area for further research which would almost need to be completed prior to the above mentioned task, is to develop a clinical definition of each of these variables. In particular this author suggests the task of developing a clinical definition of faith. This dissertation defined faith as trust, which because it was primarily a subjective phenomenon, was not subject to the critical tests of empirical evidence. Yet, this author does believe that a clinical definition of faith could be developed. What would faith look like behaviorally?³ How does a person of faith act? Does faith, behaviorally defined make any influence on grief and growth? This author suspects that the results of such research would surprise many who think they have faith.

At several points in this dissertation the subject of salugenic religion has been mentioned. This is another area for future research and one that greatly interests this author. In particular the topic clearly focused in this dissertation on the meaning-system variable. What kinds of religious beliefs are health-promoting and what kinds are health-blocking? If as this dissertation suggests trust is a key element in the maintenance of one's health, then the question might be phrased, "What kinds of religious beliefs promote trust and what kinds promote mistrust?" The issue is a critical one for all professionals and in particular for pastoral counselors, who seek to synthesize religion and psychology. Already there has been some indirect and

³This author is aware of one attempt to define faith behaviorally, published as David C. Duncombe, The Shape of the Christian Life (New York: Abingdon Press, 1969)

popular work in this area,⁴ but the subject needs some thorough empirical research.

This author expresses his hope that some of these suggestions for future research will be taken up soon. They seem to lie at the heart of the study of grief and the dialogue between religion and psychology.

⁴For example, Eli S. Chesen, Religion may be Hazardous to Your Health (New York: Collier, 1972); Wayne E. Oates, When Religion Gets Sick (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970); or the classic, Gordon W. Allport, The Individual and His Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1965).

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